

**STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

STATE: Missouri

AGENCY: Department of Elementary & Secondary Education

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL X BLIND _____ COMBINED _____

SECTION 1: STATE CERTIFICATIONS

- 1.1** The Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (name of designated state agency or designated state unit) is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under Title VI, Part B of the Act.
- 1.2** As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (name of the designated state agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3** As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan.
- 1.4** The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.5** The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.6** All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law.
- 1.7** The Commissioner of Education (title of state officer) has the authority under state law to receive, hold, and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))

(a) Conduct of public meetings.

The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.

(b) Notice requirements.

The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

(c) Special consultation requirements.

The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)

- (a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Act.
- (b) The state submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.
- (c) The state submits to the commissioner at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
 - (1) Comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - (2) Assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - (3) Innovation and expansion activities; and
 - (4) Other updates of information required under Title I, Part B or Title VI, Part B of the Act that are requested by the commissioner.
- (d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, 34 CFR 361, or 34 CFR 363.

3.2 Supported employment State plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

- (a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B of Title VI of the Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B of Title I of the Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.
- (b) The supported employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN

4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))

(a) Designated state agency.

- (1) There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
- (2) The designated state agency is:
 - (A) _____ a state agency that is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities; or
 - (B) X a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section.
- (3) In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

(b) Designated state unit.

- (1) If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or unit that:
 - (A) Is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
 - (B) Has a full-time director;
 - (C) Has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
 - (D) Is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
- (2) The name of the designated state vocational rehabilitation unit is Missouri Division of Vocational

Rehabilitation.

4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

(a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission that:

- (1) Is responsible under state law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the state and is primarily concerned with the vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(A) of this section.
- (2) Is consumer-controlled by persons who:
 - (A) Are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
 - (B) Represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated state unit under the direction of the commission is the state agency for individuals who are blind;
- (3) Includes family members, advocates, or other representatives of individuals with mental impairments; and
- (4) Undertakes the functions set forth in Section 105(c)(4) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4).

or

(b) X The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17 and the designated state unit:

- (1) Jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually state goals and priorities, and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress, in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Act, 34 CFR 361.29, and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;
- (2) Regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
- (3) Includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan, a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
- (4) Transmits to the Council:
 - (A) All plans, reports, and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be submitted to the

commissioner;

- (B) All policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
- (C) Copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(c) *If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c)* provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21)
The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) Individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) Personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) Providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) The director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) The State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a Council.

4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state, or if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency. **Yes** **No** X

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) Ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and

- (b) Develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program, in accordance with the State Plan.

4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities. **Yes** **No** X
If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) A description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) The services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) The respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) The share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

4.7 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

- (a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:
 - (1) Nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual;
 - (2) Services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
 - (3) State, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in **Attachment 4.7(b)(3)** a waiver of the statewideness requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - (A) Identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - (B) Written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - (C) Written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - (D) Written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

- (c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewideness requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

4.8 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

- (a) **Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment system.**
The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide workforce investment system.
- (b) **Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.**
Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:
 - (1) Cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;
 - (2) Coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (3) Establishment of cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
 - (4) Efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.
- (c) **Coordination with education officials.**
 - (1) **Attachment 4.8(b)(2)** describes the plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated state agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of

educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.

(2) The State Plan description must:

- (A) Provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
- (B) Include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
 - (i) Consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (ii) Transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (iii) Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (iv) Procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(d) **Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.**

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(e) **Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.**

- (1) There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations.

Yes ___ No X

- (2) If "Yes", the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Act.

- (A) Strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;
- (B) Procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
- (C) Provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and, .51(a) and (b))

(a) **In general.**

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the Plan and 34 CFR 361.

(b) **Employment of individuals with disabilities.**

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B of Title I of the Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Act.

(c) **Facilities.**

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and the regulations implementing these laws.

4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

(a) **Data system on personnel and personnel development.**

Development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development with respect to:

(1) **Qualified personnel needs.**

- (A) The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
 - (B) The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - (C) Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.
- (2) **Personnel development.**
 - (A) A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
 - (B) The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
 - (C) The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.
- (b) **Plan for recruitment, preparation, and retention of qualified personnel.**

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.
- (c) **Personnel standards.**

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including:

 - (1) Standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or,
in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.

(2) To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

(3) The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:

- (A) Specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- (B) The specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
- (C) Procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period; and
- (D) The identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards and the identification of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

(d) **Staff development.**

Policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

- (1) A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology.
- (2) Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

(e) **Personnel to address individual communication needs.**

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

(f) **Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.**

Procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

(a) Comprehensive statewide assessment.

(1) Attachment 4.11(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every 3 years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a Council). The assessment describes:

(A) The rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- (i)** Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- (ii)** Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and
- (iii)** Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

(B) The need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

(2) For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:

- (1)** Number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the Plan;
- (2)** Number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
- (3)** Costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

(1) Attachment 4.11(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

- (2) The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.
- (3) **Order of selection.**
If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3):**
 - (A) Shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) Provides a justification for the order; and
 - (C) Identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (4) **Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B funds.**
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(d) **Strategies.**

- (1) **Attachment 4.11(d)** describes the strategies, including:
 - (A) The methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
 - (B) Outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
 - (C) As applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs;
 - (D) Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Act; and
 - (E) Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- (2) **Attachment 4.11 (d)** describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:
 - (A) Address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);

- (B) Support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the Plan; and
- (C) Overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) **Evaluation and reports of progress.**

- (1) The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a Council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.
- (2) **Attachment 4.11(e)(2):**
 - (A) Provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in **Attachment 4.11(c)(1)** and, if applicable, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3)** were achieved;
 - (B) Identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
 - (C) Describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
 - (D) Assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Act; and
 - (E) Provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.35)

- (a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Act for the:
 - (1) Development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in **Attachment 4.11(a)** and goals and priorities of the state identified in **Attachments 4.11(c)(1)** and, if applicable, **Attachment 4.11(c)(3)**; and
 - (2) Support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).
- (b) **Attachment 4.11 (d)** describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.

(c) **Attachment 4.11(e)(2)** describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.
- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

5.1 Information and referral services. (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.37)

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services, if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services.

Yes___ No X

(b) **If "No":**

- (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
- (2) **Attachment 4.11(c)(3):**
 - (A) Shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (B) Provides a justification for the order of selection; and
 - (C) Identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- (3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

- (a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.
- (b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:
- (1) Assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
 - (2) Counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Act;
 - (3) Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;
 - (4) Job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 - (5) Rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and

- (6) Post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.
- (c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
 - (1) Progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) An immediate job placement; or
 - (3) Provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, an individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- (b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.

5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.52)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, their representatives, are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.30)

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.55)

- (a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:
 - (1) Who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
 - (2) Whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.
- (b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for 2 years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.
- (c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (d) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative, has input into the review and reevaluation, and through signed acknowledgement attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

- (a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.

- (c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

(b) Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**SECTION 6: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

- 6.1 Designated state agency.** (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))
The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B of the Act.
- 6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs.** (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))
Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.
- 6.3 Quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))
Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies, private non-profit organizations, or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.
- 6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B funds.** (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Act.
- 6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services.** (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))
Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.
- 6.6 Minority outreach.** (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated state agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the commissioner may require and collects the information required by Section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Act.

SECTION 7: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

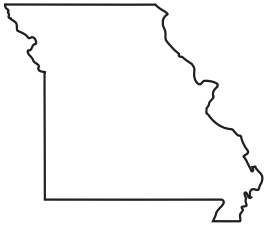
The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

7.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B of the Act are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
- (c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- 8.1 Scope of supported employment services.** (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))
- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).
 - (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
 - (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.
- 8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities.** (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))
- The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Act and funded under Title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.
- 8.3 Individualized plan for employment.** (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))
- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
 - (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - (1) Specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) Describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) Identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
 - (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.



Missouri State REHABILITATION COUNCIL

3024 Dupont Circle ♦ Jefferson City, Missouri 65109
Phone: (573) 751-3251 ♦ TTY: (573) 751-0881 ♦ Facsimile: (573) 751-1441

Linda Benoit
Chairperson
Florissant

Jason Eftink
Vice Chairperson
Scott City

Susan Adrian
St. Louis

Ina Mae Brooks
Lamar

Betty Chandler
Carl Junction

Tammy Honse Chute
Jefferson City

Marcia Cline
St. Louis

Rose Marie Hopkins
Jefferson City

Manfred Leonhard
Columbia

Gary Maddox
Springfield

Roy E. Miller, Ph.D.
Jefferson City

Mary Kay Savage
Kansas City

Diane Spieker
Jefferson City

James Terrill
Centralia

Sarah Tilley
Springfield

C. Jeanne Loyd
Assistant Commissioner
Ex Officio Member
Jefferson City

For questions or comments about
the council, contact:

Timothy E. Gaines
Missouri Division of
Vocational Rehabilitation
Phone: (573) 751-3251
Fax: (573) 751-1441
E-mail: [timothy.gaines@vr.dese.
mo.gov](mailto:timothy.gaines@vr.dese.mo.gov)

May 1, 2007

C. Jeanne Loyd
Assistant Commissioner
Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
3024 Dupont Circle
Jefferson City, Missouri 65109

Dear Dr. Loyd:

On behalf of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), I am pleased to comment on the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) state plan updates for the Title I and VI B programs. The following comments and suggestions are being made for your consideration:

1. The SRC Planning Committee, acting for the SRC, had an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendments to your state plans. We are in support of your state plan amendments and attachments.
2. The SRC continues to be concerned about the negative impact waiting lists have for eligible individuals who are in need of vocational rehabilitation services. The SRC feels strongly that waiting lists will force more individuals to become dependent on public assistance and increase the number of individuals who drop from the VR program before services are provided.

Putting eligible persons on waiting lists is contrary to your agency's goal to expedite services and to increase the numbers of individuals who reach employment outcomes. The SRC understands that your agency has been releasing individuals from waiting lists every two weeks and commends you for reducing the total number of individuals on waiting lists. However, we strongly encourage you to continue cost cutting measures to ultimately eliminate the need for waiting lists. We will continue to ask for updates at all future meetings.

The SRC feels that the statutory term "Order of Selection" is inappropriate and offensive to some individuals. As you know, the SRC has written letters regarding this issue to members of Congress and also sent copies to all state rehabilitation council chairpersons in the United States. The SRC plans to provide written comments on this matter to RSA during the public commentary period of the reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act.

3. The SRC agrees with the assessment of need for more services to individuals with significant disabilities from Hispanic cultures. The SRC supports MDVR's innovation and expansion grants with Community Rehabilitation Programs to expand services for individuals from Hispanic cultures. We believe that these grants will help your agency develop important community partnerships and working relationships with Hispanic community leaders. We also are pleased that MDVR plans to continue services and partnerships developed after the conclusion of these grants. The SRC wishes to commend MDVR's for recruiting and hiring part time employees who speak Spanish and have knowledge of Hispanic resources.

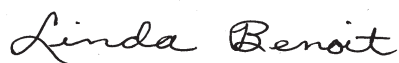
4. The SRC is pleased that your agency met the performance standard concerning the minority service rate again last year. Even though MDVR met this standard, it should be noted that MDVR's performance dropped in this area. We encourage MDVR to continue to focus on improvement in this area and utilize the innovation and expansion grants mentioned above to assist you in expanding services for individuals from underserved areas. We will be requesting updates about these initiatives and outcomes at future SRC meetings.

5. The SRC is fully supportive of MDVR's new goal of increasing MDVR awareness and utilization of assistive technology services. We would recommend that your agency take a proactive approach to providing assistive technology services and fully utilize available resources. We will also ask your agency for updates in this new priority area.

The SRC also had opportunities in the past year to provide input on other important matters with your agency. Some of these were: reviewing and providing input to the FY07 goals, priorities, strategies and state plan; the SRC 2006 Annual Report; recommendations on policy revisions and administrative rules; collaboration with other disability related Councils; public hearings; reviewing the results of due process hearings and mediation; selection of a new Impartial Hearing Officer; customer satisfaction results; feedback from public hearings; national disability issues and reviewing MDVR's outcomes regarding performance indicators.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need anything further from the SRC. Thank you for the opportunity to work with your agency on these matters of importance to persons with disabilities in the State of Missouri.

Sincerely,



Linda Benoit
State Rehabilitation Council Chairperson

C: Marcia Cline, SRC Planning Committee Chairperson
SRC Members
Timothy E. Gaines



Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

— Making a positive difference through education and service —

Response from the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to the Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's (MDVR) responses to the recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) are listed below.

Response to SRC recommendation 1: MDVR is pleased that the SRC is in support of the state plans and attachments.

Response to SRC recommendation 2: MDVR agrees that putting eligible individuals on waiting lists is contrary to our goal to increase the number of successful employment outcomes and that waiting lists have a negative impact on persons with disabilities in Missouri. MDVR will do everything possible to reduce the waiting lists and plan to regularly release individuals from the lists. MDVR also continues to implement cost effective practices and conserve funds so that more individuals can receive services. MDVR agrees to provide updates regarding waiting lists at each SRC meeting.

MDVR is not opposed to the SRC's request for RSA to rename "Order of Selection" to "Priority Categories". Order of Selection terminology is listed in the Rehabilitation Act and would need to be revised in upcoming amendments or regulation changes. MDVR agrees that the SRC should provide comment on this issue during the public commentary period when the Rehabilitation Act is reauthorized.

Response to SRC recommendation 3: The statewide assessment of needs reflects that the Hispanic population in Missouri is underserved. MDVR is pleased that the SRC provided input and support for the innovation and expansion grants to improved services to Hispanic consumers.

Response to SRC recommendation 4: MDVR agrees to continue to provide regular updates to the SRC regarding services to underserved populations and the services to clients from minority groups. Although MDVR met the performance indicator for minority service rate in FY06, it recognizes that there was a decline in performance in this area from FY05. In order to improve in this area, MDVR has developed a number of strategies, including hiring a part time diversity consultant, implementing a new ad hoc Diversity Team, hiring part time employees who speak Spanish and funding innovation and expansion grants targeted to improve services for Hispanic consumers.

Response to SRC recommendation 5: MDVR agrees with the SRC that a proactive approach to providing assistive technology services will lead to positive outcomes. MDVR is planning more staff development opportunities for counselors and district supervisors to learn about new technologies as well as partnering with other organizations such as the Missouri Assistive Technology Project and AgrAbility. MDVR also agrees to provide the SRC with updates on progress in this area.

MDVR expresses its appreciation for the excellent assistance from the SRC regarding the development of goals and priorities, consumer satisfaction surveys, impartial hearing officer selection, reviewing new policy and procedural changes, attending public hearings, and other important issues. MDVR looks forward to working with the SRC in the future to better serve persons with disabilities.

Cooperation, Collaboration and Coordination

{Attachment 4.8(b)(1)}

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) has long-standing working relationships with partner agencies both inside and outside of the Statewide Workforce Development System (SWDS). The first part of this attachment will focus on those relationships and activities within the SWDS.

Cooperation with the Statewide Workforce Development System

The SWDS of services are provided through 14 workforce regions in Missouri. Job training and skill development program services are offered through Missouri Career Centers in these 14 regions. MDVR is a key partner and works closely with the career centers to provide vocational rehabilitation services to eligible persons with disabilities. MDVR District Supervisors serve as active members on 13 out of 14 local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS). MDVR District Supervisors participated in the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with all fourteen WIBs. These MOUs direct and explain how partners work together to deliver services to persons with disabilities in the local community.

Through the MOUs with the career centers, MDVR is the primary referral source from career center partners for people with disabilities. MDVR Counselors visit various Missouri Career Centers (both full service sites and satellites) frequently to provide services to consumers in a timely fashion. One Missouri Career Center location (where all partners, including MDVR, are co-located) has an intra-building electronic linkage which has been effective. The career centers offer job training and skills development programs to all citizens who want assistance with gaining employment.

VR also provides ongoing cross-training and technical assistance to career center staff regarding assistive technology and accommodations in the workplace. A MDVR supervisor works with partner agencies to facilitate collaboration with workforce development agencies and ensure that all federal regulations pertaining to Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 are followed.

Program Navigator Initiative (DPN)

MDVR has been working with the Division of Workforce Development (DWD) in Missouri to assist in obtaining funding for the DPN Initiative. The DPN program was awarded a 1.2 million dollar grant in Missouri by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). MDVR was active in formation of the DPN in Missouri, serving on the Navigator Task Force with other Workforce Development partner agencies. This grant will be administered by DWD.

This new grant has enabled new positions called “Navigators,” to work in local career centers. These CRP employees will assist Career Center staff in providing programmatic and physical accessibility to persons with disabilities using the Career Centers. The primary objective of this program is to enhance the linkage between employers and WIBs through career centers where navigators will be placed. This collaboration among employers, CRPs, the WIBs, MDVR and SSA will facilitate access to programs and services that will enable the entry or reentry into the workforce for people with disabilities. In addition, the navigator will help provide training to career center staff to understand and assist consumers with smooth transition through available programs and services.

Cooperation with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Public Institutions of Higher Education (IHE)

In collaboration with the Missouri Rehabilitation Services for the Blind, MDVR has written cooperative agreements with all 34 public IHEs in Missouri. These agreements outline the responsibilities of each entity regarding the provision of services pursuant to the regulations specified in 34 CFR 361.53(d) (1).

Client Assistance Program

MDVR and the Client Assistance Program (CAP) have a long and productive working relationship. MDVR and CAP management staff meet on a quarterly basis to discuss important issues, such as: order of selection, new policies and best case practices, due process hearings and mediation, Section 107 Monitoring Reviews, performance indicators, joint training activities and public hearings. The CAP is a frequent participant and presenter at MDVR sponsored training sessions. A representative of the CAP is a governor appointed member of the SRC.

Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH)

MDVR participates in a number of projects, programs and activities with DMH, such as:

- **The Missouri Division of Alcohol and Drug Abuse State Advisory Council:** A representative of the MDVR management staff was appointed to serve on this statewide advisory committee. This advisory group addresses areas of drug & alcohol treatment, prevention, and re-integration into the community.
- **The Missouri Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services State Advisory Council:** A representative of the MDVR management staff was appointed to serve on this statewide advisory committee. This group

addresses areas of treatment for adults and children with mental illness and also advises DMH on issues relating to “procovery”, consumer provided services, mental health transformation, and Mental Health Awareness Day. (Note: “Procovery”™ means attaining a productive and fulfilling life regardless of the level of health assumed attainable vs. recovery, which is returning to a prior state of health).

- **Missouri Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities:** A representative of the MDVR management staff was appointed to serve on this statewide advisory committee. MDVR has been active in addressing employment issues through this Council through the development of several state level mini-grants addressing transition, employment, and transportation.
- **Mental Health Transformation – Missouri Department of Mental Health:** The State of Missouri received one of eight Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Transformation Grants based on the President’s New Freedom Commission on Mental Health. MDVR is collaborating with DMH to develop strategic planning and identify key outcomes.
- **State Incentive Grant for Treatment of Persons with Co-Occurring Substance Related and Mental Disorders:** The Governor of Missouri, DMH and MDVR applied for and received a state incentive grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. This project’s goal is to create systems change through the integration of the treatment for persons with co-occurring disorders. This is an ongoing collaboration with MDVR and DMH to improve successful employment outcomes and community integration of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness. MDVR serves in an advisory capacity as well as implementation training at the local district office level.
- **Missouri Mental Health Employment Project:** In partnership with the MDVR, DMH and the University of Massachusetts Institute for Community Inclusion were awarded an assessment and planning grant through the National Institute of Mental Health during FY06. A statewide coalition of stakeholders was formed with MDVR to assist in the assessment and planning to address changes needed in DMH programs which have limited emphasis on employment. The goal of the project is to develop DMH programs in collaboration with MDVR services and community rehabilitation programs. MDVR and DMH management staff are working closely to reach this goal and plan future joint activities, including the development of future MOUs.
- **DMH Office of Deaf Services:** MDVR’s Coordinator of Deaf Services, counselors for the deaf and the DMH’s Office of Deaf Services work

Comprehensive System Management Team

Since 2001, MDVR has been working with a coalition of state child serving agencies to develop support for local and regional providers of mental health services for children as a transition initiative. These early activities lead to the passage of SB1003 in 2004 which created the State Interagency Comprehensive Children's Mental Health Service System. This legislation formalized the facilitation and service collaboration among Missouri child serving agencies and mandated the development of a statewide plan and team. MDVR serves on this team and recently held the chair position.

Centers for Independent Living

Vocational Rehabilitation continues to collaborate with the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Centers for Independent Living (CILs) to provide direct services to people with disabilities. The 2005-2007 state plan developed by MDVR and SILC details the tasks necessary to accomplish the delivery of independent living services that will assist consumers with disabilities to achieve their goals. As part of this collaborative effort, MDVR and SILC created a new, outcomes-based measurement tool for the CILs. The new tool measures consumer satisfaction using a telephone survey method as opposed to the mail-out surveys previously used. In 2005, the CILs contacted a random sample of 1,587 consumers (both active and inactive) concerning satisfaction in areas such as personal assistance, information availability, and skills training. Survey results revealed a 98% satisfaction rate for personal assistance or referral services, a 97% satisfaction rate for information and referral services, and a 96% satisfaction rate for independent living skills training.

During 2006, SILC was involved in a number of conferences designed to address the independent living needs of people with disabilities. In April, SILC held the Missouri Transportation Conference in Kansas City, Mo. CIL staff, consumers, and local government officials listened to experts regarding transportation-related issues, which included increasing accessibility and removing barriers. Columbia, Mo. was the site of the Independent Living Conference, a joint effort between SILC and the Region VII Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program in June 2007. Independent living topics pertinent to people with disabilities headlined the conference's agenda. Consumers, CIL staff and board members attended. In addition, SILC sponsored the Universal Design Housing Conference, held in October in Springfield, Mo., to promote independent living for persons with disabilities. The conference's goal was to provide awareness of the need for accessible housing. Conference attendees included representatives from the

CILs, consumers, real estate agents, housing lenders, and builders. The CILs continue to grow in number. Heartland Inc., of Owensville, Mo., was certified in July 2006 as a new CIL, bringing the total number of centers in Missouri to 22.

In addition to the above activities, MDVR, SRC and the SILC combined public hearings in January and February 2007 to maximize consumer participation and foster new working relationships.

Programs carried out by the U.S. Department of Agriculture

The MDVR works closely with the Agricultural Engineering Extension of the University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC) in the delivery of information and assistance for agricultural operators with disabilities.

MDVR and the “AgrAbility Project” housed within the UMC and Services for Independent Living, has had a productive working relationship for more than ten years. The mutual goals of MDVR and AgrAbility are a commitment of delivering vocational rehabilitation services, assistive technology, information, education, and safe environment for farm operators with disabilities.

MDVR and AgrAbility staff set the following goals for future activities:

- Develop a Memorandum of Agreement regarding procedures for referral, assessment services, service delivery and follow-up;
- Develop a schedule of staff meetings with MDVR and AgrAbility staff, which will be held in the MDVR district offices;
- Collaborate with the National AgrAbility Project on hosting joint training with partner agencies, MDVR staff, community rehabilitation program staff, consumers and AgrAbility staff.

Missouri Reentry Project

The Missouri Department of Corrections and MDVR are working together to reduce recidivism and improve employment outcomes for incarcerated offenders with disabilities. MDVR participated in informal work groups to address employment issues and share information about MDVR’s Project SUCCESS program mentioned in the update portion of Goal 6 in state plan attachment 4.11(e). MDVR is a member of the statewide steering team for the Missouri Reentry Project which was established by the governor signing Executive Order 05-33 in September 2005. This interagency steering team continues to work toward the facilitation and service collaboration among service agencies.

**Health Resources and Services Administration
Graduate Psychology Education Training Grant
University of Missouri- Columbia, Department of Health Psychology**

MDVR has collaborated over 13 years with the University of Missouri's Department of Health Psychology in an advisory and training capacity for Neuropsychology Interns. These professionals provide comprehensive neuropsychological evaluation services for MDVR district office clientele throughout the state, particularly in rural locations. This collaborative working arrangement is beneficial due to the shortage of qualified neuropsychologists, especially in rural areas of Missouri.

**Center for Advancement of Mental Health Practices in Schools
University of Missouri- Columbia: Steering Committee for Healthy Minds,
Healthy Learners, Healthy Schools**

MDVR serves in an advisory capacity for this initiative to develop an understanding of mental health practices in the schools as a clinical and prevention capacity.

**Institute for Human Development University of Missouri – Kansas City:
Visions with Hope 360°**

MDVR serves in an advisory capacity for this grant funded partnership to link Latino children with disabilities and their families in the Kansas City area to services.

**Columbia, Missouri Housing Authority Neighborhood
Networks Program Grant**

MDVR collaborates with a local housing authority and community rehabilitation program to provide specialized employment training opportunities for mutual clientele through Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant funding. MDVR, CRP and HUD developed and signed a MOU to outline all partners' responsibilities and roles in the collaborative partnerships. This is an ongoing cooperative agreement.

Missouri Commission for the Deaf (MCD)

MDVR and the MCD work together on a number of projects, conferences and initiatives. The Executive Director of the MCD is a member of the SRC. MDVR's Coordinator of Deaf Services works with the MCD and their executive director on matters such as interpreter resources for deaf and hard of hearing consumers and staff development activities. The primary training activity that MDVR and MCD collaborate with is the annual Deaf Empowerment and Interpreter Training conference.

Coordination with Education Officials

{Attachment 4.8(b)(2)}

Transition services assist students with disabilities in the secondary school setting to successfully prepare them for transitioning into post-secondary education or integrated employment. MDVR continues to work closely with the Division of Special Education and local school districts in coordinating, planning, and providing transition services. MDVR and the SRC have developed a policy that outlines transition activities and services, including the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment for each eligible student prior to leaving school.

MDVR has entered into a written, formal interagency agreement with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding the following services and activities for students with disabilities:

- a. Consultation and technical assistance
- b. Transition planning
- c. Roles and responsibilities
- d. Procedures for outreach

Interagency Cooperative Agreements

The Division of Special Education, the Division of Career Education, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind and MDVR jointly developed a formal interagency cooperative agreement to outline policies, procedures and activities for the coordination of transition services to students with disabilities in Missouri. This agreement is signed with participating school districts throughout the State of Missouri and outlines the following:

- Consultation and technical assistance to assist school districts in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
- Transition planning that facilitates the development and completion of student's individualized education and employment programs;
- Roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
- Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services;
- Procedures for students placed on waiting lists for MDVR services under the Order of Selection.

As of October 1, 2006, 402 out of 449 (K-12) school districts with high schools in Missouri signed this cooperative agreement. MDVR counselors worked with 5,435 students with disabilities prior to graduation in FY06.

Transition Assessment Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding

In striving to improve and expand the quality of community based transition assessment services for students with significant disabilities, MDVR provides support and technical assistance to school districts, local Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs). Transition Assessments are integrated and competitive employment oriented evaluations for students with disabilities. The transition assessment may be provided by a CRP or SESP, in partnership with MDVR. Transition assessment includes one or both of the following:

- Comprehensive Transition Assessment: A variety of hands-on, paper/pencil, and community based assessment measures. This assessment will focus on the identification and evaluation of the student's vocational interests, skills, abilities, and behaviors that are specific to students with disabilities who have limited or no work experience. The identification of a vocational goal and appropriate post-school outcomes will be the major focus of this assessment.
- Community-Based Transition Assessment: This component will consist entirely of community-based assessment sites focusing on the identification and evaluation of work related strategies for students with disabilities who need intensive job site assessment. This assessment will focus on the identification of specific strategies, accommodations which may increase the student's opportunity for success in a post-secondary educational, training, or work environment.

As of October 1, 2007, 177 transition assessment MOUs were developed and signed by MDVR, CRPs/SESPs and 142 school districts. MOUs outline how transition assessment services for students with disabilities will be provided at job sites.

Special Education Advisory Panel

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) maintains an advisory panel for the purpose of providing policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities in the State. The advisory panel is appointed by the Commissioner of DESE. MDVR's Supervisor of Transition Services is an active member of this panel. Other members include:

- parents of children with disabilities and individuals with disabilities;
- representatives of institutions of higher education;
- state and local education officials and teachers;
- administrators of programs for children with disabilities;
- state agencies representatives who provide services to children with disabilities, including welfare and juvenile corrections;
- representatives of private schools and public charter schools;
- vocational, community, or business organizations.

MDVR Transition Ad-hoc Team

MDVR's assistant commissioner appointed an ad-hoc Transition Team, composed of MDVR management staff and special education teachers to provide technical assistance regarding transition related activities and services for students with disabilities. Some of the activities that the team is involved with include: developing strategies to increase overall success rates of students with disabilities participating in cooperative school-to-work programs; increasing the overall participation of students with disabilities participating in cooperative school-to-work programs; developing strategies for decreasing the dropout rate for students with disabilities from Missouri high schools.

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) Advisory Board

The NSTTAC is a national Technical Assistance and Dissemination center funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. MDVR's Regional Director is an active member of this board. The purpose of this center and advisory board is to:

- Assist state education agencies with collecting data and using data to improve transition services;
- Generate knowledge that provides a foundation for states to improve transition services that enhance post-school outcomes;
- Build capacity of states and local educational agencies to implement effective transition education and services that improve post-school outcomes; and
- Disseminate information to state personnel, practitioners, researchers, parents, and students regarding effective transition education and services that improve post-school outcomes.

The regional director works closely with other MDVR management staff to disseminate information and provide technical assistance to improve transition services and outcomes in Missouri.

Missouri Youth Leadership Forum (MYLF)

MDVR collaborates with the Governor's Council on Disability and the University of Missouri-Columbia to sponsor leadership training for students with disabilities who are juniors and seniors in high school. MYLF is statewide leadership and career development skills program for high school juniors and seniors with disabilities. By serving as delegates from their communities, students with disabilities cultivate leadership, career development skills, citizenship and social skills. Historically, MDVR has sponsored students for this four-day event at UMC, which is at no cost to students.

Missouri Parent Training and Information Center (MPACT)

MPACT is a statewide parent training and information center serving all disabilities. MDVR's Assistant Director of Transition Services is an active member of the MPACT Board. In addition, the Director of MPACT is a member of the SRC. MDVR and MPACT collaborate and work together on projects to assist students and children with disabilities to reach their full potential.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

{Attachment 4.8(b)(3)}

MDVR enters into cooperative written agreements with nonprofit, private Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to provide services on a “fee for service” basis to individuals with disabilities. The CRP must be accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) or other approved accreditation entities as specified in the agreement. All CRPs must agree to the provisions of and sign the cooperative agreement with MDVR prior to providing services to MDVR consumers. CRPs provide services which may include: comprehensive vocational evaluations, employee development, employment skills training, community employment services, and employment transition services for individuals with disabilities.

VR and CRPs work collaboratively with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes results and values successful employment outcomes. The CRP/VR Team, comprised of VR staff and executives from the CRPs, works on the following issues:

- Continued partnering efforts at the local level and expanding efforts to include administrative staff from VR, the CRPs, and the SESP along with professional organizations;
- Continued quality improvement strategies for employment outcome services;
- Assessment of supported employment and community employment services by determining program effectiveness;
- Continued assessment of current vendor requirements regarding utilization, outcomes, and cost-effectiveness;
- Continued review and revision of provider cooperative agreements.

The division funds a variety of services to approximately 7,000 consumers in CRPs. The division purchases services from local, nationally accredited, nonprofit CRPs and does not own or operate any of the programs. Access to integrated and community-based services continues to be priority with MDVR. As a result, all CRP programs emphasize community integration.

Recognizing the varying regional differences and needs of the disability community in the State of Missouri, partnering is most effective at the local/district level. Each district MDVR office has developed a “partnering plan” with the local CRPs to outline joint activities to assist mutual consumers reach employment outcomes. MDVR and CRP staff both offer input on service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to improve those processes.

MDVR furnishes reports to providers in order to coordinate efforts in serving consumers. In addition, the division seeks assistance from provider facilities in

developing strategies to reduce the number of consumers who drop out of the rehabilitation program. Every other year, MDVR combines district office Quality Assessment Reviews with CRP and SESP reviews to strengthen communication and enhance relationships between it and its providers. These joint reviews enable MDVR to maintain alignment of goals and values with partner organizations. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs on a regular basis.

Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services {Attachment 4.8(b)(4)}

As indicated in attachment 4.8(b)(3), MDVR enters into cooperative written agreements with nonprofit, private Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs) to provide services on a fee-for-service basis to individuals with disabilities. The SESP must be accredited by the CARF or other approved accreditation entities as specified in the agreement. All SESP must agree to the provisions of and sign a cooperative agreement with MDVR prior to providing services to MDVR consumers.

The SESP provides services which may include:

- Functional assessments;
- Survey of businesses and assurance of potential community based assessment and work sites suited to the needs of the clients;
- Analysis of all relevant job related variables, (i.e., transportation, job restructuring, tax credit for employers, etc.);
- Provision of direct training at employment sites until employment standards have been achieved;
- Development of an internal advocacy system;
- Provision of long-term, extended services support with the individual or employer, a minimum of twice per month.

As mentioned in attachment 4.8(b)(3), MDVR, CRPs and SESP work collaboratively with an outcome-based service model that emphasizes results and values successful employment outcomes. The CRP/VR Team, comprised of MDVR staff and executives from the CRPs and SESP, meet regularly to improve services and outcomes for persons with disabilities who are being served by SESP.

Each district MDVR office has developed a “partnering plan” with the local SESP to outline joint activities to assist mutual consumers reach employment outcomes. MDVR and SESP staff both offer input on each others’ service delivery processes during partnering meetings and develop action plans to those processes.

MDVR furnishes division reports to providers in order to coordinate efforts in serving consumers. In addition, the division seeks assistance from provider facilities in developing strategies to reduce the number of consumers who drop out of the rehabilitation program. Every other year, MDVR combines district office quality assessment reviews with CRP and SESP reviews to strengthen communication and enhance relationships between it and its providers. These joint reviews enable MDVR to maintain alignment of goals and values with

partner organizations. Other collaborative activities involve joint training programs on a regular basis.

Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) {Attachment 4.10}

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) developed a system of collecting and analyzing data annually to determine the needs of qualified personnel. This attachment describes the data system on the following: personnel/personnel development; recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel; standards; requirements for VR Counselor positions; staff development activities; personnel to address individual communication needs; performance evaluation system; and coordination with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

In FY06, the MDVR received 15,706 new applications, developed 6,480 Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE's), placed 4,152 clients into successful employment outcomes (26 closure) and 1,764 individuals exited the VR system in unsuccessful outcomes (28 closure).

The VRCs, district supervisory positions and clerical staff are directly involved in providing services for individuals with disabilities (thirteen supervisors have a partial caseload). The number of individuals who had an open file with MDVR as of 03/07/2007 was 19,274. The average number of cases per VRC (including some district supervisory staff having a caseload) is approximately 136 per counselor.

MDVR reviews each vacancy to determine if the new position should be filled or reclassified to a counselor position (if the position was a different one). The goal for MDVR is to continually evaluate caseload sizes, office work load and staffing to maximize efficiency.

MDVR anticipates approximately 15 VRCs per year will be needed to fill the vacancies from retirements, resignations, terminations, etc. The total VRCs needed for a five-year period is approximately 75.

Data System: MDVR is made up of the following sections, Disability Determinations, Independent Living and Vocational Rehabilitation. There are approximately 646 FTE (545 actual) employees with the Division in all three sections. For this report, we will focus on the Vocational Rehabilitation section of the Division. As of February 20, 2007, the breakdown of the Vocational Rehabilitation Client Services Section needed is as follows:

- 139 Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (VRCs); 153 FTEs
- 5 Assistant Supervisors who have a partial caseload.
- 26 District Supervisors (one also serves as Regional Manager, thirteen have a partial caseload)
- 70 Clerical Support Staff Positions

Job Title	Total Positions	Projected need over next five years
VR Counselor	139	75
Assistant Supervisor	5	0
District Supervisor	26	5
Clerical Support	70	12

Administrative Staff:

- 1 Assistant Commissioner
- 4 Coordinators (two are shared with all sections of MDVR)
- 3 Regional Managers
- 8 Directors (one carries a partial caseload)
- 1 Human Resource Manager (shared with all sections of MDVR and also serves as Statewide Coordinator of Deaf Services)
- 4 Assistant Director (two carry a partial caseload)
- 4 Supervisors (two are shared with all sections of MDVR and one carries a partial caseload)
- 1 Research Analyst (shared with all sections of MDVR)
- 1 Human Resource/Payroll Benefit Specialist
- 1 Accountant
- 1 Accounting Specialist
- 1 Executive Assistant
- 6 Administrative Assistants
- 2 Billing Specialists
- 1 Procurement Specialist (shared with all sections of MDVR)
- 1 Mail Service Specialist (shared with all sections of MDVR)
- 1 Secretaries

There are two Graduate Rehabilitation Counselor Training Programs in Missouri: the University of Missouri-Columbia (UMC) and Maryville University in St. Louis. Both offer a Master's level degree program in Rehabilitation Counseling and graduates of these programs are ready to take the CRC examination upon graduation.

In December 2006, UMC had 6 students in this program and do not expect any to graduate until May 2008. MDVR maintains close contacts with the program and will look to hiring possible graduates in 2008.

Maryville University began offering a new program with a Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling, September 1999. The program has 68 students enrolled in the fall 2006 semester and sixteen students are expected to graduate from Maryville University by the summer 2007. MDVR hired ten graduates of this program since the start of their program in 1999.

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel: MDVR works actively in recruiting new counselors with Master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling or other related areas specified in this attachment. As mentioned above, Missouri has two graduate level rehabilitation counseling programs, which (at this time) are not sufficient to produce the number of qualified rehabilitation professionals needed by MDVR in all areas of the state. Even though graduate enrollment is rising at Maryville University, many of the students are not willing to relocate from the St. Louis area. Job vacancy announcements are sent to all Region VII universities that have Master's programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. In addition, vacancy notices are sent to the Rehabilitation Clearinghouse at Utah State University and other institutions of higher learning such as Southern Illinois University-

Carbondale, Emporia State University, Arkansas State University and Missouri universities that offer graduate level counseling, social work and/or psychology programs.

MDVR advertises all openings with *Great Hires* web page, lists all openings on the agency's web site and advertises in local newspapers as well as traditionally African American and Hispanic newspapers.

MDVR has developed strategies to recruit individuals with culturally diverse backgrounds. All job announcements are sent to various Historically Black Colleges and Universities such as Lincoln University-Jefferson City, Missouri; Southern University-Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Fort Valley State College-Fort Valley, Georgia; and Mississippi State-Jackson, Mississippi. As mentioned above, African American and Hispanic newspapers are being utilized for job advertisements. Various MDVR staff has also been identified to be "ambassadors" to colleges and universities in order to contact and recruit students and participate in college career fairs.

MDVR received priority training funding to recruit and hire hourly employees to assist with staff development and Hispanic liaison activities in the Kansas City and Southwest Missouri areas. MDVR expanded the initial focus of the Hispanic populations to include other underserved populations. MDVR has hired two part-time hourly rehabilitation technicians who are familiar with Hispanic culture and can communicate in Spanish and English and one Diversity Consultant to assist with ongoing staff development activities and outreach to underserved populations around the state. These employees will work with MDVR as well as community rehabilitation program staff, and staff involved in the Hispanic Liaison Services Innovation and Expansion Grant activities.

At the end of FY06, approximately 11% of all VRCs and approximately 10% of District Supervisors with MDVR are persons from diverse backgrounds. MDVR is also striving to recruit individuals with disabilities. District supervisors and VRCs in MDVR district offices receive all job notices for VRCs. Many of the individuals referred by the VR office are interviewed and hired by MDVR. Others participate in field experiences and internships sponsored by MDVR. Other disability organizations including Centers for Independent Living and Community Rehabilitation Programs are consulted about recruiting persons with disabilities. At the end of FY06, approximately 16% of MDVR's VRCs were individuals with disabilities and 11% of administrators of MDVR were persons with disabilities.

MDVR continues to offer internships to graduate students who are interested in employment as a VRC. MDVR sponsors non-paid as well as paid internships as funds are available. As mentioned above, the agency also sponsors other practicum and field experience for graduate students. In FY06, one student from UMC completed a practicum experiences in the Jefferson City District Office and one UMC student completed an internship at the Columbia District Office.

MDVR has a close working relationship with graduate rehabilitation counselor programs at UMC, Maryville, University of Arkansas, University of Southern Illinois-Carbondale and Emporia State University. MDVR representatives sit on the advisory councils of the above

programs, or make regular contacts and visits to recruit students from the above Masters level rehabilitation programs. Staff development needs and important future training/recruiting issues are discussed at these advisory meetings.

Personnel Standards: The State of Missouri has requirements for licensure of psychologists, professional counselors and social workers listed in Chapter 337 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri (RSMo 337). Each of these areas specifically reference practices of vocational rehabilitation counseling within the definitions of the statutes. Each of the areas also indicate the requirement of a master's degree in psychology (primarily psychological in nature), counseling (or its equivalent) and social work respectively. It should be noted that the RSMo 337 continues to allow the licensing of psychologists with a master's degree, however, new applicants must now have a doctoral degree.

MDVR acknowledges that RSMo 337 is the standard in Missouri for the highest degree required for vocational rehabilitation counselors. Acceptable degrees under this statute include Master's degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling, Counseling or related areas, Clinical Psychology, Counseling Psychology or Clinical Social Work.

As of the date of this report, MDVR has 138 VRCs who meet the CSPD requirements. As stated earlier, there are a total of 139 VRC positions (including part time positions). MDVR has identified one VRC who needs supplemental coursework in Social Work to meet the requirements for CFR 361.18 and RSMo 337. This employee will complete all coursework by May 2007.

MDVR is pleased that three VR counselors completed CSPD requirements. One VRC recently completed coursework from the University of Kentucky and obtained a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling in December 2006. One VRC completed the necessary coursework in order to meet the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRC) requirements in the D-4 category. One VRC has completed the necessary coursework in order to be eligible to take the Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) exam in Missouri.

MDVR continues to prioritize the CSPD funding of the VRCs mentioned above who are involved in university coursework, certification and licensure. All of the above individuals' tuition and fees for the CSPD activities have been funded by MDVR during FY06 and the Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) VII CSPD grant which ended in FY05. This was a federal CSPD grant awarded to the University of Missouri-RCEP to assist state VR agencies in the region, such as MDVR, to meet the federal standards for CSPD. MDVR was able to utilize this grant first for staff tuition costs, but is committed to ensuring that all VRCs tuition costs are funded, including the staff mentioned above, to obtain necessary coursework to meet the above requirements.

The Human Resource Manager (HRM) for MDVR will develop an individualized plan with each newly hired staff to identify/evaluate specific staff development needs, required courses, available resources and timelines necessary to achieve the standards in RSMo 337 or as mentioned above, the appropriate CRC requirement. The HRM will also monitor each staff development plan to ensure that all objectives are met. As necessary, the HRM will consult

with the state licensing boards and CRC officials. All staff will be required to submit updated transcripts to the HRM to ensure compliance with the objectives of the standards. Although MDVR has not been significantly affected by shortages of qualified personnel, MDVR's starting salaries for VRCs are somewhat below that of other similar positions in many other states and surrounding areas. MDVR continues to experience difficulty recruiting in some areas of the state and some candidates have turned down MDVR offers due to salary. In some of the rural offices, MDVR needed to recruit individuals who did not fully meet the standards mentioned above due to a shortage of qualified applicants. Individuals who do not meet the initial minimum standards must have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree in a non-related area and are informed about the CSPD requirements and agree to comply with supplemental coursework. All counselors placed under CSPD are expected to complete this requirement within a five-year period from the date of hire. Even with these challenges and the need to require staff to take courses to meet CSPD requirements, MDVR does not feel that there will be significant problems that inhibit the ability to recruit and hire qualified staff.

The above plan is non-discriminatory and encourages the retraining and recruitment of persons with disabilities and from diverse backgrounds.

Annually MDVR reviews the performance evaluations for rehabilitation staff to determine if they are consistent with the actual job functions, agency values and rehabilitation act mandates. A part of this evaluation assesses their levels of performance based on the RSA performance indicators.

Staff Development: MDVR has a comprehensive program for in service training and staff development for all positions. Staff at all levels will attend training in new employee orientation, cultural diversity, sexual harassment prevention, and customer service. Supervisory staff and upper management personnel are required to attend training in leadership, supervision, performance appraisal methodology, and other training offered through the State and other private sources.

All new professional and paraprofessional staff, together with their district supervisor, completes MDVR's New Employee Training Manual or New Support Staff Training Manual which assists in the development and understanding of the rehabilitation field and the agency's goals, priorities and responsibilities in serving individuals with disabilities under the Federal/State VR Program.

In addition to new employee orientation, new professional staff receive training specific to vocational counseling, career development, job development, job placement from RCEP VII and introductions to learning disabilities from instructors from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

MDVR supports staff attendance on an annual basis to the "Power Up" Conference which promotes the use and understanding of assistive technology and rehabilitation technology services and resources across the state. This conference is sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project.

Staff development needs are established in a number of ways. A survey of training needs is administered annually to all professional and paraprofessional staff to ascertain the needs and interests of all MDVR staff. MDVR also monitors performance in staff and has incorporated this into individual performance on performance indicators. Other methods of determining the staff development needs are performance from office reviews, evaluation of consumer satisfaction studies, feedback and recommendations from the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Independent Living Council.

Results of the training needs survey are shared with members of the administrative team and regional managers. MDVR works to provide training in a variety of manners to accommodate staff needs. The majority of staff request that training be conducted on a regional basis.

The nature and scope of the staff development program is tied to the overall goals and priorities of MDVR. MDVR is committed to improving staff competencies to ensure that the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, will be fully implemented and the philosophy embraced. MDVR training supports the goals and priorities that have been established in the statewide assessment of need.

MDVR received a five-year grant from RSA for In-Service Training to assist with staff development. The following are the goals under this grant which are supportive of MDVR's goals and priorities:

1. Improve Quality of Rehabilitation Services
2. Enhance Customer Satisfaction
3. Strengthen Partnerships

MDVR continues to participate with and has collaborative relationships with research programs, partner agencies and the RCEP VII, which include research projects in traumatic brain injury, mental illness and agriculture. MDVR also worked with the Missouri Department of Mental Health (DMH) and the Institute for Community Inclusion from the University of Massachusetts-Boston on a National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) grant on the Missouri Mental Health Employment Project. MDVR, RCEP VII and DMH then provided statewide training to staff regarding the above project and are currently in the process of applying for a grant to begin a second phase of the above project to improve employment outcomes for persons with mental illness.

Other training areas which MDVR frequently sponsors or staff participates in are:

- Legal and Ethical Issues in Rehabilitation
- Medical and Psychological aspects of Disability
- Vocational Counseling
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- Cultural Diversity
- Job Development/Job Placement/Supported Employment
- Transition from School to Work and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

- Workforce Investment Act/Workforce Development Initiatives
- Command Spanish
- Vocational Assessment
- Rehabilitation Technology
- Missouri Rehabilitation Association Annual Conference
- Individual training requests pertinent to the field of Rehabilitation.
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Supported Employment Issues Forum
- Power Up – Assistive Technology
- Mental Health

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs: MDVR employs seven Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors for the Deaf (VRCDs), located throughout Missouri who are skilled in manual communication for the deaf and hard of hearing. Individuals served by MDVR will be referred to one of these VRCDs for services. Each year, they meet for training to discuss services and meet with students at the Missouri School for the Deaf. Seven VRCDs and the Coordinator of Deaf Services attended the regional deaf conference sponsored by RCEP VII in Kansas City this past fall. Two VRCDs attended a deaf cultural competency workshop in June 2006. All VRCDs are encouraged to take classes to improve their signing skills and one took Sign II classes at a community college for one semester.

MDVR employs three VRCDs who are deaf or hard of hearing. Two have completed a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and one other VRCD has a mild hearing loss and has completed the necessary coursework to take the Licensed Professional Counselor exam in Missouri.

MDVR staff work with several Assistive Technology Projects located at various Centers for Independent Living in the State, which has demonstration centers to explore, review and demonstrate various assistive technology devices, services and resources available to individuals with alternative communication needs.

Applicants and eligible individuals who have limited English speaking skills are provided interpreters, funded by MDVR. MDVR translated all brochures into Spanish so that individuals and families who speak Spanish have access to information in their native language. MDVR is also providing “Command Spanish” training through Missouri Western State University to both professional and support staff to assist with basic phrases and information which can be communicated to clients who speak Spanish. As mentioned previously in this attachment, MDVR received priority training funding and hired two hourly employees to assist with staff development and Hispanic liaison activities in the Kansas City and Southwest Missouri regions.

Coordination with personnel development under Individuals with Disabilities

Education Act (IDEA): MDVR works closely with the Division of Special Education and school districts to coordinate staff development activities and services for students with disabilities. During FY06, MDVR provided transition services for 5,435 students with disabilities enrolled in secondary schools; an increase of 695 students from FY05.

During FY06, the ad hoc Transition Team, composed of MDVR staff and special education personnel from both the state and local level, focused on improving and expanding MDVR's statewide database and reporting system that measures transition-related activities and services. This information will be shared with other agencies and used in staff development activities. The team will also continue to utilize the promotional video, transition guide and manual to facilitate better services with students with disabilities.

The Cooperative Work Experience Program Agreement (COOP) continues to be disseminated to local school districts in an effort to obtain agreements. This agreement outlines the goals, activities and responsibilities of MDVR and school systems toward services to students with disabilities. The total number of school districts participating in the COOP program has steadily increased over the years from 363 in FY03 to 402 in FY06 out of 449 districts.

MDVR's assistant commissioner also approved a statewide transition agreement between MDVR, Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) and Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs) for the provision of comprehensive transition assessment services for students with disabilities. This agreement required local school districts, MDVR district offices, and local providers to develop joint Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) outlining how transition assessment services would be provided. At the end of FY06, MDVR developed 177 Comprehensive Transition Assessment MOUs across the state, with approximately 142 different school districts and 28 various CRPs and SESP, which represents an increase of 60 new MOU agreements in the last two years.

The ad hoc transition team continues to focus on measuring student outcomes and tracking transition and COOP related services through the MORIS caseload management system. MDVR established a data collection and reporting system that will be able to track the number of new applicants (MDVR cases opened on students with disabilities) who were referred from local school districts for transition-related services. In addition, at the transition team's request and with support from the Division of Special Education, the programmers at MDVR continue to work on expanding this database to measure/track the following: the number of students with disabilities participating in the COOP program; the number of students with disabilities successfully completing the COOP program and/or who received transition related services prior to graduation; students successfully obtaining their high school diploma, and are continuing further post-school training or education; and/or those obtaining successful competitive employment in their chosen field of work.

In FY06, a total of 1,004 students with disabilities participated in the COOP Program from MDVR and exited the system either successfully in an employment outcome or unsuccessfully without an employment outcome. Of those closures, 727 obtained a successful employment outcome. The overall success rate for students with disabilities referred to MDVR for transition services prior to graduation/exit from high school was 71% for FY06.

MDVR, Division of Special Education, school personnel and CRP staff are involved in partnership activities, joint training and technical assistance activities. The Assistant Director of Transition Services is an active member of the State's Special Education Advisory Panel.

Note: More information on transition services with MDVR is available on goal five in state plan attachment 4.11(c) (1).

State Rehabilitation Council: The State Rehabilitation Council reviews and comments on the development of the CSPD plan and related policies.

Results of a Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Missourians with Disabilities

{Attachment 4.11(a)}

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) jointly conduct a comprehensive, statewide assessment of the rehabilitation needs of Missourians with disabilities, annually over a three-year period. MDVR submits the results of the needs assessment to the Rehabilitation Services Administration on an annual basis. The conclusions and recommendations of these assessments are incorporated into MDVR's goals and priorities for the purpose of improving services to individuals with disabilities.

MDVR uses the following methods to collect, in aggregate, information on the rehabilitation needs of Missouri individuals with disabilities:

a. Public Hearings

Annually, MDVR conducts public hearings throughout the state to obtain input on the state plan, its key goals and priorities, and any other topic related to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services for individuals with disabilities.

b. Input from the State Rehabilitation Council

During quarterly meetings, the SRC provides input to MDVR on the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities.

c. Consumer Satisfaction Surveys

Each month, MDVR surveys a random sample of clients' cases during the IPE stage and at case closure to obtain feedback on VR services and to determine how to better serve the needs of individuals with disabilities.

d. Strategic Teams

MDVR utilizes both ad hoc and on-going teams, such as the Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP)/VR team, Transition team, and Cultural Diversity team, to gather data from its partners, school districts, and underserved individuals with disabilities. At a minimum, teams meet two times a year.

e. Analysis of Standards and Indicators

On a quarterly basis, MDVR management reviews data to ensure the Standards and Indicators are being met or exceeded. The SRC annually reviews and analyzes this information with MDVR.

Additional assessment methods include:

- ▶ case reviews and provider reviews performed every two years per office
- ▶ quarterly reviews of case management data
- ▶ review census data—annually or as data is available

- due process hearings and mediations—annually MDVR analyzes feedback from hearings

1. The following is a summary of the comprehensive, statewide assessment results in response to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the service needs of:

(a) Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities (MSD) Including Their Need for Supported Employment (SE) Services

Based on MDVR data from the last two years, the projected number of individuals with MSD, who will apply and will be interested in VR services, is approximately 10,660 for FY08. Of that number, approximately 3,500 individuals will need SE services.

From the comprehensive statewide assessment, MDVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of the MSD:

- SE Services -- The nature of the service itself requires intensive one-on-one job training service. Services are provided by accredited CRPs and include job development, job coaching, natural supports, task analysis and assessment, counseling, and advocacy services. Usually, SE services will not exceed nine months but may be provided for up to 18 months.
- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services -- Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices, and assistive technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. Services are usually provided over a four-week period by accredited CRPs and qualified rehabilitation engineers.
- Self Employment Services -- Individuals with MSD will need assistance in setting up approved business plans for self employment. These services may include required business equipment, various supplies, rental fees or start-up costs for the plan. Services will be provided by VR counselors and business consultants as needed. Services can last up to six months.
- Assessment Services -- Services depend on the needs and informed choice of the individuals. Assessments can range from comprehensive to specific and are provided by accredited CRPs. A comprehensive assessment evaluates vocational, emotional, and intellectual work tolerance. This type of assessment can extend over an eight-week period. A specific job evaluation assesses vocational objectives for individuals who have stable work histories. This type of evaluation may be completed within a week's time.

(b & c) Individuals with Disabilities Who Are Minorities and Individuals Who Have Been Unserved or Underserved by the Vocational Rehabilitation Program

An analysis of the comprehensive, statewide assessment revealed that there are no populations in Missouri that are unserved.

The needs assessment identified underserved individuals with disabilities as minority populations of Hispanics and African Americans.

Hispanics:

Based on MDVR data from the last two years and census data, the projected number of individuals with disabilities that are Hispanic, who will apply and will be interested in VR services, is approximately 341 for FY08. After analyzing census data, MDVR feels these 341 individuals are underserved when compared to the total number of Hispanics in Missouri.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MDVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's Hispanic population with disabilities:

- Interpreter Services -- These services depend upon the specific needs of clients and are provided by MDVR's bilingual VR rehab techs and state-contracted interpreters. The duration of interpreter services mirrors the length of other services.
- SE Services -- The nature of the service itself requires intensive one-on-one job training service. Services are provided by accredited CRPs and include job development, job coaching, natural supports, task analysis and assessment, counseling, and advocacy services. Usually, SE services will not exceed nine months but may be provided for up to 18 months.
- Assistive Technology and Rehabilitation Engineering Services -- Services include assessment and recommendations for accommodations, assistive devices, and assistive technology necessary to improve the quality of work and/or increase work productivity. Services are usually provided over a four-week period by accredited CRPs and qualified rehabilitation engineers.
- Assessment Services -- Services depend on the needs and informed choice of the individuals. Assessments can range from comprehensive to specific and are provided by accredited CRPs. A comprehensive assessment evaluates vocational, emotional, and intellectual work tolerance. This type of assessment can extend over an eight-week period. A specific job evaluation assesses vocational objectives for individuals who have stable work histories. This type of evaluation may be completed within a week's time.
- Job Placement Services -- Services involve specialists who identify and cultivate job placement possibilities in the community. These services offer short-term follow-up support and can last between three and nine months. VR counselors and accredited CRPs provide job placement services.

African Americans:

Based on MDVR data from the last two years, the projected number of individuals with disabilities that are African American, who will apply and will be interested in VR services, is approximately 5,488 for FY08. MDVR data reveals that as a percentage, there are less whites dropping from services than African Americans. Therefore, a percentage of African Americans are underserved.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MDVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of Missouri's African American population with disabilities:

- Intensive Follow-Up Services -- MDVR established the need for intensive follow-up services for individuals at risk of dropping out of services. Key VR staff, VR intake counselors, and accredited CRPs assist with follow-up services and activities. Clients are contacted to uncover reasons for leaving or barriers to receiving services. Key VR personnel and CRP staff work with community resources to alleviate any barriers. These intensive follow-up services are implemented before clients' cases are closed and can last between three and nine months.

(d) Individuals with Disabilities Served Through Other Components of the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Based on information from the Workforce Development Board, the projected number of individuals with disabilities that will be served through the Missouri Workforce Investment System for FY08 is approximately 5,600.

From the comprehensive needs assessment, MDVR identified the following services as necessary to meet the key needs of individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide Workforce Investment system:

- job search assistance
- labor market information
- resume assistance

Individuals providing the services are Veterans program representatives, workforce development representatives, and other Workforce Investment Act partners. These services vary in length and could last up to 18 months.

2. The Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs within the State

a) Establish new CRPs: No, MDVR does not feel that there is a need to establish new CRPs.

b) Expand/develop current network of CRPs: No, MDVR does not feel that there is a need to expand or develop the current network of CRPs.

c) Improve CRPs: Yes, MDVR has identified the following initiatives to improve CRPs within the state:

- Coordinate additional, joint training activities with VR counselors and CRP staff regarding outcome-based services with CRPs.
- MDVR district offices and CRP staff will develop, implement, and maintain localized partnering agreements.
- MDVR will conduct quality reviews to determine the effectiveness of the partnering agreements and to evaluate practices and outcomes in order to achieve better methods of serving individuals with disabilities.
- Issues discussed at exit staffing of quality reviews will be followed up collaboratively by VR and CRP staff. These issues will be compiled in a written plan of action and reviewed on a quarterly basis.
- The CRP/VR Team (comprised of VR counselors, supervisors, and CRP administrators) will meet and discuss progress and feedback; making recommendations to meet the above objective.

**Annual Estimates; Goals and Priorities;
Order of Selection;
Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B
Funds; Strategies; and Progress Reports**

**Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services
{Attachment 4.11(b)}**

The number of individuals in the Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) who were eligible for services as of February 1, 2007 was 17,802.

The total estimated number of individuals in Missouri who will be applying and eligible for services through MDVR in FY 08 is approximately 28,000. The estimated number of individuals who will be eligible and receive services in FY 08 in the Part B Title I is 22,500 and Part B Title VI Program is 3,500.

The estimated costs in FY 08 for serving the above individuals in the Titles 1 and VI programs are approximately \$51,700,000.

As described in Attachment 4.11 (c) (3) of this state plan, MDVR is currently in an order of selection. The estimated number of eligible individuals who will receive services in FY 08 under each category of service is as follows:

Category 1:	10,660 served (Includes 3,500 through the Title VI Program)
Category 2:	14,560 served
Category 3:	<u>780 served</u>
Total:	26,000 served

Based upon service costs associated with FY 06, it is projected in FY 08, that MDVR will spend approximately 48.4% (\$25,022,800) of the above estimated amount in category 1; 46.8% (\$24,195,600) in category 2; and 4.8% (\$2,481,600) in category 3*.

* These are estimates of individuals (Category 3) who were already being served by MDVR prior to the 10/1/2003 implementation of the order of selection. Their services were not interrupted after the order of selection was implemented. No eligible individuals have been removed from Category 3 since 10/1/2003.

Goals and Priorities

{Attachment 4.11(c)(1)}

The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's goals and priorities for FY 2008 are based upon the following:

- most recent comprehensive statewide assessment,
- the performance on standards and indicators,
- input from the State Rehabilitation Council and
- other pertinent information, i.e., consumer satisfaction surveys, input from the Client Assistance Program (CAP), public hearings, feedback from prior 107 Monitoring Reviews, etc.

Based upon the above, MDVR and the SRC developed FY 08 goals, priorities and strategies in order to focus on reducing the waiting lists, improving dropout rates, and improving timeliness to service delivery, which correlate to improved outcomes (performance indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4 and an improved minority service rate 2.1). A new goal of increasing MDVR awareness and utilization of assistive technology services was also developed from consumer feedback, public hearings and SRC input.

As mentioned by the SRC in state plan attachment 4.2(c), reducing waiting lists has also been an emphasis of the SRC. Although a specific goal to reduce waiting lists was not established for FY 08, strategies were developed to improve efficiency, reduce drop out rates and reduce the number unsuccessful closures. It is felt that these cost cutting measures will have a positive correlation to reducing waiting lists. These strategies involve the following: utilizing management staff to carry partial caseloads to improve efficiency and maximize use of FTEs; having intake workers, support staff, supervisory staff, counselors and CRPs to contact individuals who are at risk to drop out of the VR system; reducing individuals exiting the VR program before services and without employment outcomes.

The following FY 08 goals and priorities for vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs have been revised from the prior year. Goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed upon by MDVR and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), as described in Attachment 4.2(c) of this state plan.

Goal 1: *Increase employment outcomes for persons with disabilities exiting the program.*

Outcome measures/targets: To meet or exceed prior years percentages of persons with disabilities who achieve an employment outcome after receiving services.

Goal 2: *Reduce the average amount of time from application to eligibility.*

Outcome measures/target: A comparison of application date to eligibility determination date will be looked at on an annual basis. Quality Assurance Review reports will be used to review this goal.

Goal 3: *Reduce the average amount of time for individuals from eligibility to services (program development) within the categories being served.*

Outcome measures/target: A comparison of eligibility date to services will be reviewed on an annual basis. Management reports will be utilized to assist in determining the timeliness of the provision of services.

Goal 4: *Increase the number of employment outcomes of high school students with disabilities exiting the MDVR program into employment outcomes.*

Outcome measures/target: The number of students with disabilities employed after receiving transition services will be equal to or greater than last year.

Goal 5: *Increase the overall percentage of Social Security disability benefit recipients who obtain competitive employment outcomes and obtain substantial gainful activity.*

Outcome measures/target: The number of persons who receive Social Security disability benefits and retain competitive employment outcomes for 9 months with substantial gainful activity will be compared to the prior year. This is a percentage of all employment outcomes.

Goal 6: *Meet or exceed the overall level of MDVR's consumer satisfaction of the prior year.*

Outcome measures/target: Data from the eight areas of the MDVR Consumer Satisfaction Surveys will be compared to the previous end of year data.

Goal 7: *Increase utilization of assistive technology services with consumers.*

Outcome measures/target: Meet or exceed overall utilization of assistive technology services from the prior year. End of year utilization reports regarding expenditures and service codes for assistive technology services will be utilized.

Order of Selection (Priority Categories)

{Attachment 4.11(c)(3)}

- 1) MDVR will not be able to serve all eligible individuals in FY 2008. Individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. Services shall be provided based upon the eligible individual's placement in one (1) of the following priority categories:
 - (A) Priority Category I: An individual with the most significant disability as defined below.
 - (B) Priority Category II: An individual with a significant disability as defined below.
 - (C) Priority Category III: An individual with a disability as defined below.
- 2) An eligible individual will be placed in the appropriate priority category and receive written notification of the assigned priority category. The eligible individual's date of application will be used to determine the order of services within a priority category.
- 3) Individuals will be notified of their right to appeal their category assignment.
- 4) An eligible individual's placement in a priority category may be changed under justifiable circumstances.
- 5) Rationale for placement will appear in the individual's case file.
- 6) The order of selection shall in no way affect the provision or authorization of diagnostic and evaluation services needed to determine eligibility.
- 7) Services authorized or provided to any eligible individual shall not be disrupted as a result of an order of selection or the closing of a priority category.
- 8) Order of selection priority categories do not apply to post-employment services.
- 9) All funding arrangements for providing services, including any third-party arrangements and awards by MDVR shall be consistent with the order of selection. If any funding arrangements are inconsistent with the order of selection, MDVR shall renegotiate these funding arrangements so that they are consistent with the order of selection.
- 10) The order of selection shall in no way affect eligible individuals' access to services provided through MDVR's information and referral system.

- 11) Eligible individuals who are in a priority category that is not open, shall be provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance (including counseling and referral for job placement) using appropriate modes of communication to assist them in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment. These individuals will also be referred to other appropriate Federal and State programs, including the statewide workforce investment career centers.
- 12) Individuals being referred to appropriate programs, as mentioned above, shall be provided the following:
 - (A) A notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program
 - (B) Information identifying a specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred
 - (C) Information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.

Definitions

Individual with the Most Significant Disability: An individual who is seriously limited in three or more of the following functional areas: self-care; communication; mobility; self-direction; work tolerance; work skills; and/or interpersonal skills, and

- a. Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and
- b. Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Individual with a Significant Disability: An individual who has a severe physical or mental impairment that seriously limits one or two functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome; and,

- a. Whose vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time; and

- b. Who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), spinal cord conditions (including paraplegia and quadriplegia), sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.

Individual with a disability: All other eligible individuals.

Justification

MDVR continues to experience an increase in the cost of providing services to persons in all categories. Due to this increase in the cost of services and the insufficient financial resources, MDVR is not able to provide services to all eligible individuals. MDVR estimates that there are approximately 28,000 individuals in FY 08 that will apply and be eligible for MDVR services and approximately 26,000 eligible individuals who will receive services.

Estimated Service and Outcome Goals for each Priority Category for FY 08:

Category 1: 10,660 served (Includes 3,500 through the Title VI Program)

Category 2: 14,560 served

Category 3: 780 served

Total: 26,000 served

Category 1: 1,948 employment outcomes

Category 2: 2,660 employment outcomes

Category 3: 142 employment outcomes

Total: 4,750 employment outcomes

* These are estimates of individuals (Category 3) who were already being served by MDVR prior to the 10/1/2003 implementation of the order of selection. Their services were not interrupted after the order of selection was implemented. No eligible individuals have been removed and placed into active services from Category 3 since 10/1/2003.

Estimated Timelines for achieving the Outcome Goals

Although the timeline varies significantly with each individual, it is estimated that the average number of months to reach an employment outcome for categories one and two are approximately 24 months. No eligible persons are being placed into active status from category three at the time of this report; therefore the wait time associated with this category is indefinite. All individuals in the category two wait list must be served prior to serving category three.

Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds {Attachment 4.11(c)(4)}

The FY 08 goals and priorities for the distribution of funds from section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act are:

- To continue expanding community based services for persons with the most significant mental illnesses and students with disabilities.
- To expanding community based services to persons with the most significant disabilities who are Hispanic.

Title VI, Part B funds are utilized for supported employment, job development, and individual and group placement models of supported employment. All Title VI, Part B funds for supported employment services are utilized through a “fee for service” as established in MDVR’s supported employment cost analysis. Title I funds are also utilized for the provision of supported employment services.

In FY 06, a total of 3,346 individuals with the most significant disabilities received supported employment services through MDVR. Of the 1,040 clients that exited the program and received supported employment services during FY 06, 73% were successfully employed in competitive jobs. These individuals averaged \$6.84 per hour and worked an average of 24 hours per week.

Based upon the above numbers served, it is estimated that approximately 3,500 individuals with the most significant disabilities will be served in FY 08. It is also estimated that in FY 08, MDVR will spend approximately 3.4 million dollars in Title VI, Part B funds and Title I funds. These services will be provided through non-profit, accredited, community rehabilitation programs.

State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

{Attachment 4.11(d)}

- I. All strategies identified to achieve goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities and overcome barriers to accessing services in vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs in FY 08 are listed below. The following strategies have been developed, reviewed and revised by MDVR and the SRC:

Goal 1: *Increase employment outcomes for persons with disabilities exiting the program.*

Objective 1: Continually evaluate caseload sizes, office work load and staffing to maximize efficiency.

Strategy 1: Continue to review every MDVR vacancy to determine if additional counselor positions are needed.

Strategy 2: Utilize all office staff with alternative strategies to improve case processing and outcomes.

Strategy 3: Utilize office staff, including support staff and rehabilitation technicians to assist with the "re-activation plan" in assisting to re-locate clients, make follow-up contacts, etc.

Objective 2: Decrease the number of individuals exiting services without employment outcomes.

Strategy 1: Maintain close contact with clients throughout the VR process.

Strategy 2: MDVR will utilize all assigned staff, including support staff, Intake Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians to assist counselors in locating eligible clients when contact is lost and utilize re-activation plans to reintroduce them to services.

Strategy 3: Develop and maintain close working relationships with other state resources and partner agencies (e.g. Departments of Mental Health, Workforce Development partners, Independent Living Centers, Community Rehabilitation Centers, Supported Employment Service Providers, etc.) to continue to follow up with consumers.

Objective 3: Evaluate Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) to ensure effectiveness in serving clients with significant and most significant disabilities.

Strategy 1: Coordinate joint training activities with MDVR Counselors and CRP staff regarding outcome-based services with CRPs.

Strategy 2: District offices and CRP staff will develop, implement and maintain localized partnering agreements.

Strategy 3: Monitoring review exit staffing, comprised of district office staff, MDVR and CRP administrators will be utilized to monitor the effectiveness of the partnering agreements.

Strategy 4: Issues discussed at exit staffing and/or feedback from staff, partnering plans, etc., from MDVR and CRP staff will be followed up collaboratively by the MDVR staff, including the Regional Managers. These issues will be compiled in a written plan of action and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

Strategy 5: The Community Rehabilitation Program-VR Team (comprised of MDVR Counselors, Supervisors and CRP administrators) to meet and discuss progress and feedback, making recommendations to meet the above objective.

Objective 4: Increase the percentage of successful outcomes with individuals who are from culturally diverse backgrounds.

Strategy 1: MDVR will recruit rehabilitation counselors from diverse backgrounds and advertise openings in traditionally diverse advertising sources.

Strategy 2: Utilize MDVR's Innovation and Expansion (I & E) grants with two community rehabilitation programs to expand and improve services to Hispanic clientele in northwest and southwest Missouri areas. These "Hispanic Liaison Services" I & E grants will improve outcomes with culturally diverse clients, provide new outreach opportunities and referral sources, reduce cultural barriers and increase cultural competency with MDVR staff.

Strategy 3: MDVR will recruit and retain individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English to work in one of the Kansas City/St. Joseph area offices and also in the Springfield/Joplin areas.

Strategy 4: Individuals from diverse backgrounds will be utilized to assist MDVR in staff development, training activities, interpreting and to assist staff with I & E activities with the Hispanic population.

Strategy 5: An ad hoc team of individuals made up of MDVR and CRP staff, a diversity consultant and community partners will be brought together to provide oversight and recommendations.

Strategy 6: A diversity consultant will work with MDVR to develop and provide on-going diversity training for all staff.

Objective 5: Ensure the client's awareness/involvement in their choice of goals and services.

Strategy 1: MDVR will continue to conduct office reviews, Quality Assurance Reviews (including the local CRP vendors) and Counselor reviews to monitor client's involvement in informed choices.

Strategy 2: MDVR will utilize the Quality Assurance Review reports to evaluate whether Counselors are providing informed choices to consumers. This information is a component utilized during counselor probationary/ promotional reviews.

Strategy 3: Continue to obtain and evaluate feedback from a sampling of clients regarding informed choices.

Strategy 4: MDVR will develop reports (e.g. dropout rates, success rates, etc.) about CRPs and schools that serve VR clients. These reports will then be provided to district office staff for dissemination to consumers.

Objective 6: Reduce the number of eligible clients exiting the program before receiving services.

Strategy 1: An ad hoc team comprised of MDVR and CRP staff will be formed to develop strategies for assessing the reasons individuals drop out of the system and to recommend actions to meet this objective.

Strategy 2: MDVR will designate personnel in local offices to assist counselors in locating clients, identify barriers to services and assist in getting clients back into VR services.

Objective 7: Increase the number of referrals receiving Social Security Administration (SSA) disability benefits that apply for MDVR services (SSA disability recipients who assign their Ticket to Work to MDVR).

Strategy 1: MDVR's Work Incentive Supervisor and other designated staff will develop strategies to increase referrals and a system of follow-up with SSA referrals that did not make application with MDVR.

Strategy 2: The Work Incentive Supervisor and designated staff will provide VR administrators on-going communication regarding updated information on "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act," regulations and procedural issues.

Strategy 3: District supervisors and Regional Managers will develop a plan of action to ensure that MDVR counselors provide information regarding Ticket to Work and SSA Continuing Disability Reviews.

Strategy 4: MDVR counselors and benefit specialists will work jointly to assist consumers with employment and SSA benefit related questions.

Goal 2: *Reduce the average amount of time from application to eligibility.*

Objective 1: All offices will review office business processes to maximize timeliness in eligibility determination and service delivery.

Strategy 1: Appropriate management staff will carry partial caseloads to assist with timeliness.

Strategy 2: Regional managers will assist offices in arranging staff assignments to achieve this objective. This may include having supervisors, counselors, rehabilitation technicians, secretaries, billing specialists and intake counselors assisting with gathering documentation to determine eligibility and services.

Strategy 3: District supervisors will utilize reports to monitor timeliness from application to eligibility

Goal 3: *Reduce the average amount of time for individuals from eligibility to services (program development) within the categories being served.*

Objective 1: All MDVR offices will review office business processes to maximize timeliness in service delivery.

Strategy 1: Appropriate management staff will carry partial caseloads to assist with timeliness.

Strategy 2: Regional managers will assist offices in arranging staff assignments to achieve this objective. This may include having supervisors, counselors, rehabilitation technicians, secretaries, billing specialists and intake counselors assisting with gathering documentation to determine eligibility and services.

Strategy 3: District supervisors will utilize reports to monitor timeliness from application to eligibility.

Strategy 4: Create an ad hoc team to develop best case practices and strategies to reduce time to service delivery.

Goal 4: *Increase the number of employment outcomes of high school students with disabilities exiting the MDVR program into employment outcomes.*

Objective 1: Increase the number of participating students with disabilities.

Strategy 1: Increase the number of public school districts that participate in the Cooperative Work Experience Program for transition services.

Strategy 2: The ad hoc Transition Team composed of MDVR supervisors, counselors, Division of Special Education staff and high school personnel will meet as requested to recommend strategies to increase the number of participating high schools as well as increase the students who are participating.

Strategy 3: The ad hoc Transition Team will develop joint training activities with MDVR, school, and community rehabilitation staff. Training will be focused on improving services and outcomes for students with disabilities.

Strategy 4: MDVR district supervisors and regional managers will work with district offices to ensure that all public high schools have regular contact from counselors. Statistical reports will be utilized to monitor referrals, applicants and outcomes

Objective 2: Increase the community based services and employment opportunities available to students with significant disabilities.

Strategy 1: MDVR will continue to utilize community-based transition assessment services/opportunities for students with disabilities who are enrolled in a participating Cooperative Work Experience Program.

Strategy 2: MDVR will continue to promote the development of partnering activities with school districts and community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and to develop new memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with school districts and CRPs in order to provide community-based transition assessment services and opportunities for students with disabilities.

Strategy 3: Continue to utilize promotional material, including a video tape and newsletter to show students, parents, potential employers and community leaders about the Cooperative Work Experience Program.

Strategy 4: The ad hoc Transition Team, consisting of MDVR staff and school personnel will continue to work on strategies to improve services and resources to students with significant disabilities.

Strategy 5: MDVR will work with other partners to develop resources and funding for joint training activities with transition counselors, CRPs, educators and Independent Living Center staff. The focus of this training will be to develop avenues for professionals to network and develop transition action plans.

Goal 5: *Increase the overall percentage of Social Security disability benefit recipients who obtain competitive employment outcomes and obtain substantial gainful activity.*

Objective 1: Increase the number of referrals receiving SSA disability benefits that apply for MDVR services (SSA disability recipients who assign their ticket-to-work to MDVR).

Strategy 1: MDVR's Work Incentive supervisor and other designated staff will develop strategies to increase referrals and a system of follow-up with SSA referrals that did not make application with MDVR.

Strategy 2: The Work Incentive Supervisor and designated staff will provide management staff on-going communication regarding updated information on "Ticket-to-Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act," regulations and procedural issues.

Strategy 3: MDVR district supervisors and regional managers will develop a plan of action to ensure that counselors provide information regarding Ticket to Work and SSA Continuing Disability Reviews.

Strategy 4: MDVR counselors and benefit specialists with Independent Living Centers will work jointly to assist consumers with employment and SSA benefit related questions.

Objective 2: Increase the percentage of persons obtaining employment outcomes that meet the SSA's definition of SGA.

Strategy 1: The Work Incentive Supervisor will work with other professionals and consultants to develop strategies for improving service delivery and success rates with clients receiving SSA disability benefits.

Goal 6: *Meet or exceed the overall level of MDVR's consumer satisfaction of the prior year.*

Objective 1: Staff at all levels in MDVR will receive on-going training in effective customer service.

Strategy 1: Provide customer service training using staff from MDVR to incorporate MDVR's mission and customer value statements into the training.

Strategy 2: MDVR will continue to utilize awards such as the MDVR Mission Champion Award and Employee of the Month to recognize and reward staff performance related to outstanding customer service.

Strategy 3: MDVR will develop strategies to utilize the consumer satisfaction data and employee awards with the quarterly newsletter, "VR Voice," to effectively share with staff.

Objective 2: Develop recommendations and strategies to improve and measure customer feedback.

Strategy 1: The SRC and MDVR administrative staff will continue to meet and review consumer satisfaction feedback and develop ways to improve satisfaction with consumers.

Goal 7: *Increase utilization of assistive technology services with consumers.*

Objective 1: MDVR counselors and district supervisors will receive training on assistive technology services, strategies and resources.

Strategy 1: MDVR will work jointly with CRP and other partnering agencies to develop and sponsor on-going training in assistive technology services.

Strategy 2: MDVR's statewide assistive technology specialist will provide technical assistance and training to VR counselors throughout the state in assistive technology resources.

Strategy 3: MDVR staff will participate in activities, training programs and conferences sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project (MATP).

Strategy 4: An assistive technology ad hoc committee will be appointed to develop new strategies and action planning for best case practices, staff development and emerging technologies.

Objective 2: MDVR's counselors for the deaf and hard of hearing (VRCDs) and staff will receive training and technical assistance regarding new technology, resources and communication devices for hard of hearing and late deafened consumers and best case practices.

Strategy 1: MDVR's coordinator for deaf services will meet with all VRCDs on an annual basis to discuss new strategies, resources and issues for deaf and hard of hearing consumers.

Strategy 2: A pilot project will be developed with a VRCD to provide video relay service technology equipment for consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing

Strategy 3: MDVR's coordinator for deaf services and the VRCDs will develop regional training for general counselors to provide training on new communication devices, alerting devices and other assistive technology for consumers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Strategy 4: MDVR's coordinator for deaf services will work closely with VRCDs, partner agencies and providers to develop best case practices and reasonable and customary fees for assistive devices.

II. Strategies to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities:

All of the above strategies will be used to improve services to individuals in FY 08. Specific strategies used to "expand" services for individuals with disabilities and support innovation and expansion activities are listed as follows and taken from Goal One, Objective 4 and Goal Four, Objective 2:

- MDVR will recruit rehabilitation counselors from diverse backgrounds and advertise openings in traditionally diverse advertising sources.
- Utilize MDVR's Innovation and Expansion (I & E) grants with two community rehabilitation programs to expand and improve services to Hispanic clientele in northwest and southwest Missouri areas. These "Hispanic Liaison Services" I & E grants will improve outcomes with culturally diverse clients, provide new outreach opportunities and referral sources, reduce cultural barriers and increase cultural competency with MDVR staff.
- MDVR will recruit and retain individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English to work in one of the Kansas City/St. Joseph area offices and also in the Springfield/Joplin areas.
- Individuals from diverse backgrounds will be utilized to assist MDVR in staff development, training activities, interpreting and to assist staff with I & E activities with the Hispanic population.
- An ad hoc team of individuals made up of MDVR and CRP staff, a diversity consultant and community partners will be brought together to provide oversight and recommendations.
- A diversity consultant will work with MDVR to develop and provide on-going diversity training for all staff.
- MDVR will continue to utilize community-based transition assessment services/opportunities for students with disabilities who are enrolled in a participating Cooperative Work Experience Program.
- MDVR will continue to promote the development of partnering activities with school districts and community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) and to develop new memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with school districts and CRPs in order to provide community-based transition assessment services and opportunities for students with disabilities.

III. Strategies describing how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process:

Specific strategies for the above area are listed as follows and taken from Goal 7, Objective 1 (MDVR counselors and district supervisors will receive training on assistive technology services, strategies and resources):

- MDVR will work jointly with CRP and other partnering agencies to develop and sponsor on-going training in assistive technology services.
- MDVR's statewide assistive technology specialist will provide technical assistance and training to VR counselors throughout the state in assistive technology resources.
- MDVR staff will participate in activities, training programs and conferences sponsored by the Missouri Assistive Technology Project (MATP).
- An assistive technology ad hoc committee will be appointed to develop new strategies and action planning for best case practices, staff development and emerging technologies.

IV. Strategies describing how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis:

See the above strategies on assistive technology. These same strategies will be used to identify and serve individuals receiving assistive technology devices and services on a statewide basis.

V. Outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities:

Specific strategies that will be used to reduce cultural barriers and identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities are taken from Goal One, Objective 4:

- MDVR will recruit rehabilitation counselors from diverse backgrounds and advertise openings in traditionally diverse advertising sources.
- Utilize MDVR's Innovation and Expansion (I & E) grants with two community rehabilitation programs to expand and improve services to Hispanic clientele in northwest and southwest Missouri areas. These "Hispanic Liaison Services" I & E grants will improve outcomes with culturally diverse clients, provide new outreach opportunities and referral sources, reduce cultural barriers and increase cultural competency with MDVR staff.
- MDVR will recruit and retain individuals who are bilingual in Spanish and English to work in one of the Kansas City/St. Joseph area offices and also in the Springfield/Joplin areas.
- Individuals from diverse backgrounds will be utilized to assist MDVR in staff development, training activities, interpreting and to assist staff with I & E activities with the Hispanic population.

- An ad hoc team of individuals made up of MDVR and CRP staff, a diversity consultant and community partners will be brought together to provide oversight and recommendations.
- A diversity consultant will work with MDVR to develop and provide on-going diversity training for all staff.

VI. Strategies to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program:

See above strategies regarding individuals with disabilities who are minorities. These same strategies will be used to identify and serve individuals who are underserved populations.

VII. Strategies for improving community rehabilitation programs:

Specific strategies that will be used to improve community rehabilitation programs are taken from Goal One, Objective 3:

- Coordinate joint training activities with MDVR Counselors and CRP staff regarding outcome-based services with CRPs.
- District offices and CRP staff will develop, implement and maintain localized partnering agreements.
- Monitoring review exit staffing, comprised of district office staff, MDVR and CRP administrators will be utilized to monitor the effectiveness of the partnering agreements.
- Issues discussed at exit staffing and/or feedback from staff, partnering plans, etc., from MDVR and CRP staff will be followed up collaboratively by the MDVR staff, including the Regional Managers. These issues will be compiled in a written plan of action and reviewed on a quarterly basis.
- The Community Rehabilitation Program-VR Team (comprised of MDVR Counselors, Supervisors and CRP administrators) to meet and discuss progress and feedback, making recommendations to meet the above objective.

VIII. Strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators:

Specific strategies that will be used to improve performance on standards and indicators are taken from Goal One, Objectives Two and Six and Goal Three, Objective One. These strategies focus on improving dropout rates, and improving timeliness to service delivery, which correlate to improved outcomes (performance indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 & 1.4 and an improved minority service rate 2.1):

- Maintain close contact with clients throughout the VR process.

- MDVR will utilize all assigned staff, including support staff, Intake Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians to assist counselors in locating eligible clients when contact is lost and utilize re-activation plans to reintroduce them to services.
- Develop and maintain close working relationships with other state resources and partner agencies (e.g. Departments of Mental Health, Workforce Development partners, Independent Living Centers, Community Rehabilitation Centers, Supported Employment Service Providers, etc.) to continue to follow up with consumers.
- An ad hoc team comprised of MDVR and CRP staff will be formed to develop strategies for assessing the reasons individuals drop out of the system and to recommend actions to meet this objective.
- MDVR will designate personnel in local offices to assist counselors in locating clients, identify barriers to services and assist in getting clients back into VR services.
- Appropriate management staff will carry partial caseloads to assist with timeliness.
- Regional managers will assist offices in arranging staff assignments to achieve this objective. This may include having supervisors, counselors, rehabilitation technicians, secretaries, billing specialists and intake counselors assisting with gathering documentation to determine eligibility and services.
- District supervisors will utilize reports to monitor timeliness from application to eligibility.
- Create an ad hoc team to develop best case practices and strategies to reduce time to service delivery.

IX. Strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system assist persons with disabilities:

Specific strategies that will be used to improve assist other components of the statewide workforce investment system assist persons with disabilities are taken from Goal One, Objectives 2 and 3; and Goal 7, Objective 1:

- Develop and maintain close working relationships with other state resources and partner agencies (e.g. Departments of Mental Health, Workforce Development partners, Independent Living Centers, Community Rehabilitation Centers, Supported Employment Service Providers, etc.) to continue to follow up with consumers.
- District offices and CRP staff will develop, implement and maintain localized partnering agreements.
- MDVR will work jointly with CRP and other partnering agencies to develop and sponsor on-going training in assistive technology services.

X. How MDVR uses strategies to achieve goals and priorities identified in state plan attachment 4.11(c)(1):

MDVR utilizes a variety of teams to assist with the development and implementation of many of the strategies identified in this section. Team members include MDVR staff, management, providers, consumers and school personnel. Quality Assurance reviews are also used to assess the progress of the strategies toward the targets.

XI. How MDVR uses strategies to support innovation and expansion activities:

As indicated in section V above strategies have been developed to better serve individuals who are underserved. MDVR and the SRC specifically identified persons with disabilities who are Hispanic as an underserved population. As also described in this section, those strategies are specifically being developed and implemented to utilize Innovation and Expansion (I & E) grants with two community rehabilitation programs to expand and improve services to Hispanic clientele in northwest and southwest Missouri areas. These “Hispanic Liaison Services” I & E grants and the strategies developed for them will improve outcomes with culturally diverse clients, provide new outreach opportunities and referral sources, reduce cultural barriers and increase cultural competency with MDVR staff.

XII. How MDVR uses strategies to overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program?

Specific strategies have been developed to assist with language and cultural barriers for individuals who are Hispanic. These strategies are identified in section V above and help provide equitable access to vocational rehabilitation and supported employment services.

Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities

{Attachment 4.11(e)(2)}

The Goals and Priorities for FY 2006 established by MDVR and the State Rehabilitation Council were as follows:

Goal 1: *To increase the percentage of persons with disabilities exiting the program into quality employment outcomes.*

Report of progress: Goal met. FY 05 overall percentage of persons exiting VR system into employment outcomes was 67.6%. At the end of FY 06, this percentage increased to 70.2%. "Quality" employment outcomes were evaluated by reviewing the overall hourly wages by MDVR clients who obtain employment outcomes. The average hourly earnings for MDVR clients in FY 05 were \$9.01 per hour. This increased to \$9.20 per hour at the end of FY 06.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- Continue to review every MDVR vacancy to determine if a counselor position could be more effective.
- Utilize all office staff with alternative strategies to improve case processing and outcomes.
- Utilize office staff, including support staff and rehabilitation technicians to assist with the "re-engagement plan" in assisting to re-locate clients, make follow-up contacts, etc.
- Maintain closer contact with clients throughout the VR process.
- MDVR will utilize all assigned staff, including support staff, Intake Counselors and Rehabilitation Technicians to assist counselors in locating eligible clients when contact is lost and attempt to reintroduce them to services.
- Monitor placement plans for persons ready for employment.
- MDVR staff will utilize the re-engagement plan to contact clients that are difficult to reach, especially those who will likely be closed unsuccessful.
- Develop and maintain close working relationships with other state resources (e.g. Departments of Mental Health, Workforce Development partners, Independent Living Centers, etc.) and vendors to continue to follow up with consumers, coordinate provision and timing of services and identify other resources for support.
- Coordinate joint training activities with VR Counselors and CRP staff regarding outcome-based services with CRPs.
- District offices and CRP staff will develop, implement and maintain localized partnering agreements.
- Monitoring review exit staffing, comprised of District Office Staff, VR and CRP administrators will be utilized to monitor the effectiveness of the partnering agreements.
- Issues that are raised from the staffing and feedback from VR and CRP staff will be followed-up by the VR staff, including the VR Regional Managers.

These issues will be compiled in a written plan of action and reviewed on a quarterly basis.

- The Community Rehabilitation Program-VR Team (comprised of agency VR Counselors, Supervisors and CRP administrators) to meet and discuss progress and feedback, making recommendations to meet the above objective.
- Increase the number of African American counselors in St. Louis, Kansas City and Southeast Missouri area.
- The Cultural Diversity Team composed of VR staff with diverse backgrounds will identify strategies to reduce the number of African American clients dropping from services.
- MDVR will utilize the re-engagement plan to contact individuals who dropped out before and after services to determine which strategies might be developed to reduce the number dropping from services.
- The Client Services and Cultural Diversity Teams will continue to identify reasons for unsuccessful closures and to recommend actions to assist in meeting this objective.
- The Cultural Diversity Team is charged with developing strategies to increase the success rate for African Americans reaching employment outcomes.
- MDVR will recruit for an individual who is fluent in Spanish to work in one of the Kansas City area offices.
- MDVR will implement on-going diversity training for all staff with the objectives to improve workplace diversity, cultural competence and ultimately improve employment outcomes for MDVR consumers from diverse backgrounds.
- The MDVR Teams will continue to examine consumer choice and make recommendations to meet the objective.
- Conduct office reviews, Quality Assurance Reviews (including the local CRP vendors) and VR Counselor reviews to monitor client's involvement in informed choices. Statistical reports will be used to evaluate data to determine if Counselors are providing informed choices to consumers. Counselor reviews will be conducted on those counselors ready to move off of probation and those to be considered for promotion to a Senior Counselor position.
- Continue with a pilot project in the Rolla VR District Office to obtain and measure feedback from clients regarding informed choices, immediately after first individualized plan for employment is developed.
- Information (i.e. drop out rates, success rates, etc.) about CRPs and schools that serve VR clients will be provided to District Office staff for dissemination to clients.
- The Client Services and Cultural Diversity Teams will continue to develop strategies to assess the reasons for individuals dropping out of the system and to recommend actions to meet the objective.
- VR personnel will be assigned to assist counselors in locating clients, identify barriers to services and assist in getting clients back into services.

Goal 2: *Maintain a “zero wait” to apply for VR services and to reduce time to services and/or employment for vocational rehabilitation clients.*

Report of progress: Goal met. Procedures were successfully implemented by MDVR district offices to ensure that there is now a zero wait time available for individuals to apply for services.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- All supervisors will be informed on a continual basis on the importance of zero wait to application.
- Regional Managers will assist offices in arranging staff assignments to achieve this objective. This may include having supervisors, counselors, rehabilitation technicians, secretaries, billing specialists and intake counselors assisting with referral intake.
- Statistical reports will be developed to assist District Supervisors and Regional Managers monitor timelines from eligibility determination to employment outcome.

Goal 3: *To ensure that students with disabilities have access to individualized transition services resulting in quality on-the-job experiences, employment outcomes and independence.*

Report of progress: Goal met. During FY 06, MDVR counselors provided transition services for 5,435 students with disabilities enrolled in secondary school; which is an increase of 695 students from FY 05. At the end of FY 06, a total of 727 students with disabilities obtained employment outcomes after receiving transition services from MDVR. This is an increase of 36 students who reached an employment outcome from the prior year. In addition, the number of schools participating in the MDVR’s Cooperative School-to-Work program has increased from 401 in FY 05 to 402 in FY 06. MDVR Counselors will visit all public high schools in Missouri a minimum of once per year to meet with students and provide services to eligible students with disabilities.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- Increase the number of public school districts that participate in the Cooperative Work Experience Program for transition services.
- The VR Transition Team composed of VR Supervisors, Counselors, Division of Special Education staff and High School personnel will meet regularly and recommend strategies to increase the number of participating high schools as well as increase the students who are participating.
- District Supervisors and Regional Managers will work with district offices to ensure that all public high schools have regular contact from counselors. Statistical reports will be utilized to monitor referrals, applicants and outcomes.
- Continue to utilize community-based transition assessment services/opportunities for students with disabilities who are enrolled in a participating Cooperative Work Experience Program.
- Continue to utilize promotional material, including a video tape and newsletter available to show students, parents, potential employers and community leaders about the Cooperative Work Experience Program.

- The Transition Team, consisting of VR staff and school personnel will continue to work on strategies to improve services and resources to students with significant disabilities.
- MDVR will work with other partners to develop resources and funding for joint training activities with transition Counselors, Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), educators and Independent Living Center staff. The focus of this training will be to develop avenues for professionals to network and develop transition action plans.

Goal 4: *To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services offered through Missouri Career Centers.*

Report of progress: Goal met. MDVR is the primary referral source from career center partners for people with disabilities. MDVR Counselors visit all Missouri Career Centers (both full service sites and satellites) on a regular basis to ensure and provide services to consumers.

Thirteen of the fourteen regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) have MDVR District Supervisors as board members and all fourteen WIBs signed MOUs. These MOUs were jointly developed and signed by WIB/MDVR representatives and describe how each partner organization will work together to deliver a variety of services to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services through the career centers.

MDVR has been working with the Division of Workforce Development in Missouri to develop a “Disability Program Navigator” (DPN) Initiative. The DPN program was awarded a 1.2 million dollar grant in Missouri by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). MDVR was active in formation of the DPN in Missouri, serving on the Navigator Task Force with other Workforce Development partner agencies. This grant will be administered by the Missouri Division of Workforce Development and MDVR will be a key partner in this program.

The new DPN program has new positions called “Navigators” which will be hired for each region to work out of local career centers in the state through Comprehensive Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs). These CRP employees will work with Career Center staff in providing programmatic and physical accessibility to persons with disabilities. The primary objective of the DPN is to increase employment and self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities by enhancing the linkage between employers and state WIBs through career centers where navigators will be housed. Collaboration with ETA, WIBS, MDVR and SSA will facilitate access to programs and services that will enable the entry or reentry into the workforce for people with disabilities. In addition, the navigator will ensure that career center staff possess and demonstrate comprehensive knowledge and skills to assist individuals with disabilities to “navigate” through available programs and services. This will include developing improved relationships with related federal and state programs which can provide information on various programs and services available to job seekers with disabilities.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- Develop a method of tracking VR client usage of the Missouri Career Centers by utilizing the University of Missouri-Columbia Data Center. UMC will assist in the development of cross matching client data with partner agencies.
- Provide training for VR staff, including new MDVR counselors, to ensure that persons who are ready for employment are knowledgeable about making application to the Missouri Career Centers.
- MDVR's Director of Information Technology and members of the Technology Team will assist the CIO for the State accomplishes this objective.

Goal 5: *To increase the percentage of persons obtaining competitive employment outcomes for recipients of Social Security disability benefits and obtain substantial gainful activity.*

Report of Progress: Goal met. The number of MDVR clients receiving SSA disability benefits and achieving an employment outcome for FY 06 was 1,214, which is an increase from last year. This number is more than 29% of the total number of MDVR employment outcomes, which is a slight percentage increase from last year.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- The Work Incentive Team, comprised of VR staff, will develop strategies to increase referrals and a system of follow-up with SSA referrals that did not make application with MDVR.
- The Work Incentive Team will design and help implement training for VR staff on the "Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act" and regulations.
- District Supervisors and Regional Managers will develop a plan of action to ensure that MDVR counselors provide information regarding Ticket to Work and SSA Continuing Disability Reviews.
- MDVR counselors and Benefit Specialists with Independent Living Centers will work jointly to assist consumers with employment and SSA benefit related questions.
- The Work Incentive Team will work with other professionals and consultants to develop strategies for improving service delivery and success rates with clients receiving SSA disability benefits.
- Develop a regular quarterly statistical system of reporting on the progress of persons who meet SGA and staff with VR management, supervisors and Counselors.
- Increase the success rate of individuals obtaining an employment outcome who are receiving SSA disability benefits.

Goal 6: *To achieve all required levels of standards for the VR Performance Indicators.*

Report of Progress: Goal Met. MDVR met all required standards of performance in FY 06.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- The Coordinators of Client Services and Development and Consumer Affairs will be responsible to develop an ongoing plan to keep staff informed and up-to-date about the indicators and MDVR's performance.
- Division teams consisting of VR staff, vendors, partner agencies and consumers will provide input and develop strategies on how to improve MDVR's performance in both the areas of Employment Outcomes and Equal Access to Services.
- Performance indicator information and emphasis will be presented to new staff and newly promoted supervisors on a regular basis.
- Division Teams will provide strategies and recommendations in order to improve the above objective.

Goal 7: *Improve all areas of consumer satisfaction as measured by the MDVR consumer satisfaction survey.*

Progress report: Assessment of progress from last year is not possible. In an effort to improve the consumer satisfaction survey process and increase response rates, the State Rehabilitation Council authorized and approved changes in the previous consumer satisfaction questions, sampling methodology and survey card distribution protocol. These changes made it not possible to compare FY 05 survey results to FY 06. Consumer feedback continued to be positive during FY 06. For example, of the consumers surveyed who received services, 97 percent felt that they were treated with respect, and 93 percent indicated that they were involved in making choices concerning their employment goals and services. All of the results are categorized in groups, such as statewide totals, disabilities, gender, race, etc. The response rate from consumers who received services was 33 percent, up from 19 percent in FY 05.

Strategies that contributed to the FY 06 goals and priorities being achieved:

- Provide customer service training, using staff from MDVR-including members of the Consumer Affairs Team and incorporate MDVR's mission and customer value statements into the training.
- The Capacity Building and Consumer Affairs Teams to recommend strategies related to incentives, rewards and staff performance on outstanding customer service.
- The Consumer Affairs and Client Services Teams to develop strategies to utilize the consumer satisfaction data and effectively share with staff.
- The Consumer Affairs Team to continue to meet periodically to develop effective means of improving satisfaction with clients.

Evaluation of MDVR performance on standards and indicators in FY 06:

In FY 06, MDVR met all required performance standards. Although MDVR met all required levels of performance, the evaluation revealed the need to focus on reducing status 30 and 28 closures (individuals dropping out of service after eligibility). Further evaluation of these closure statistics of individuals exiting the MDVR system after eligibility and not reaching services (status 30 closures) and after receiving services but not reaching an employment outcome (status 28), were disproportionately higher

for individuals from minority groups. This has a direct and negative correlation with the minority service rate, which determines performance on performance indicator 2.1.

Standard 1: EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES –

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.1 – The number of individuals exiting the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program who achieved an employment outcome during the current performance period compared to the number of individuals who exit the VR program after achieving an employment outcome during the previous performance period.

Required standard – Equal to or greater than previous year
FY 05: 3,950 FY 06: 4,152 Difference: 202+

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.2 – Of all individuals who exit the VR program after receiving services, the percentage who are determined to have achieved an employment outcome.

Required Standard 55.8% FY 06: 70.2%

***PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.3** – Of all individuals determined to have achieved an employment outcome, the percentage who exits the VR program in competitive or self-employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage.

Required Standard 72.6% FY 06: 95.8%

***PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.4** – Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive or self-employment with earnings equivalent or at least the minimum wage, the percentage who are individuals with significant disabilities.

Required Standard 62.4% FY 06: 97.4%

***PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.5** – The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive or self-employment with earnings levels equivalent to at least the minimum wage as a ratio to the State's average hourly earnings for all individuals in the State who are employed (as derived from the Bureau of Labor Statistics report "State Average Annual Pay" for the most recent available year).

Required Standard .52 FY 06: .52

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 1.6 – Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive or self-employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the difference between the percentage who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at exit and the percentage that reported their own income as the largest single source of support at application.

Required Standard 53

FY 06: 58.5

Standard 2: EQUAL ACCESS TO SERVICES –

PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 2.1 – The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio to the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities.

Required Standard .80

FY 06: .80

*** INDICATES A “PRIMARY INDICATOR”**

FY 2006 Goals for the Supported Employment Program were as follows:

Goal 1: *Expand community based services for persons with the most significant mental illnesses.*

Progress Report: Goal met. The percentage of individuals with mental illness receiving supported employment services increased from 27% in FY 05 to 31% in FY 06. (This percentage is based on the total number of consumers who exited the program after receiving supported employment services.)

MDVR has initiated partnering activities with the Department of Mental Health (DMH), joint training and staff development activities with VR, DMH and community rehabilitation program (CRP) personnel. MDVR is also reviewing the Evidence-Based Practice of SE for persons with serious mental illness. As part of its evaluation, MDVR, the Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services, and the Institute for Community Inclusion from the University of Massachusetts-Boston applied for and were awarded an assessment and planning grant through the National Institute of Mental Health during FY 06.

The project, referred to as the “Missouri Mental Health Employment Project,” formed a guiding coalition of stakeholders composed of consumers and staff from Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) and SESP, and various state agencies. The group is developing an understanding of capacity across systems and implications for developing high fidelity supported employment. The project has a potential for funding through FY 08.

Goal 2: *Expand community based services for students with disabilities*

Progress Report: Goal met. During FY 06, MDVR counselors provided transition services for 5,435 students with disabilities enrolled in secondary school; which is an increase of 695 students from last year. In FY 06, a total of 727 students with disabilities received transition services from MDVR. This is an increase of 36

students who reached an employment outcome from the prior year. At the end of FY 06, the overall success rate for the transition program at MDVR was 71%.

The number of schools in the MDVR's Cooperative School-to-Work program has increased for the last several years. For example, the total number of school districts participating in the COOP program increased from 401 in FY 05 to 402 in FY 06.

MDVR's assistant commissioner approved a statewide transition agreement between MDVR, CRPs and Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs) for the provision of comprehensive transition assessment services for students with disabilities. These assessments provide integrated, community based employment evaluations designed for students with limited work experiences. The agreements establish a MOU with local school districts, MDVR district offices, and local providers outlining transition assessment services to students with disabilities. These MOU agreements have steadily increased to 177 at the end of FY 06. This represents an increase of 60 new agreements in the last two years.

Goal 3: *Expand community based services to persons with the most significant disabilities who are Hispanic*

Progress Report: Goal met. In order to expand services to Hispanic clientele, MDVR awarded a three year innovation and expansion (I & E) grant to two different CRPs. The number Hispanic consumers who have active cases with MDVR as well as the corresponding number of successful employment outcomes have increased since the grants began in FY 05. These three year grants will fund liaison services, including staffing for persons in different areas of the state fluent in Spanish and English and who are well connected to Hispanic communities. The purpose of these new programs includes expanding services to the most significant disabilities; including supported employment services to individuals from the Hispanic population.

In addition, MDVR received additional priority in-service training funds from RSA to hire additional three part time employees to assist with these I & E projects and to assist with staff development activities, as well as with outreach in diverse communities. The employees include a diversity consultant and a rehabilitation technician who speaks fluent Spanish. The employees will assist MDVR with I & E diversity initiatives and participate in an ad hoc diversity team which has been appointed to improve services to persons from diverse cultures.

Evaluation and Reports of Progress of Innovation and Expansion Activities to Expand and Improve Services to Individuals with Disabilities and to Support the SRC and SILC

In FY 06, MDVR participated in the development of the National Vocational Rehabilitation-Business Network. This national network is designed to enhance the business connections for VR agencies and to improve employer access to qualified candidates and support services available through the VR program. This national network will increase the employment opportunities for VR consumers on a state,

regional and national level which in turn will have a positive impact on the direct business connections and employment outcomes with individuals with disabilities. The national network will expand the capacity of MDVR to deliver employment related services to consumers through access to a national network of VR employment specialists and their business connections. MDVR contributed \$5,000 in FY 06 to assist with staffing and operational costs of developing and managing the national network. MDVR has assigned two management staff with responsibilities of overseeing and facilitating activities on this project and plans on contributing an additional \$5,000 for development costs in FY 08.

Based upon MDVR's and the SRC's statewide assessment of need, an unmet need was established for persons with significant disabilities from the Hispanic population in Missouri. An analysis of MDVR's numbers served, employment outcomes, statewide census data, feedback from public hearings, as well as recommendations from the SRC, indicated a need for more vocational rehabilitation services for individuals from Hispanic cultures. With input from the SRC, MDVR requested proposals from interested Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs) or Supported Employment Service Providers in Missouri to develop services for individuals who are most significantly disabled, including supported employment services for individuals who are Hispanic. On March 1, 2006, MDVR awarded a three year innovation and expansion (I & E) grant to two different CRPs. The total funding for these grants is approximately \$135,000 per award. In FY 08, MDVR estimates that the amount of expenditures from these grants will be approximately \$52,500 with the two providers contributing a total of \$37,500 toward these projects.

These three year grants will fund liaison services, including staffing for persons in different areas of the state fluent in Spanish and English and who are well connected to Hispanic communities. The purpose of these grants is to help MDVR better serve this underserved population and continue to provide a high level of service after the grants conclude. In addition, I & E grantees will refer individuals being served in this program to various community resources, including English as a Second Language Programs. Results of these grants are favorable. The number Hispanic consumers who have active cases with MDVR have increased since the grants began, as well as the number of successful employment outcomes.

In addition, MDVR received additional priority in-service training funds from RSA to hire additional three part time employees to assist with diversity priorities. These part time employees assist with the development of staff development activities, as well as with outreach in diverse communities. The employees include a diversity consultant and a rehabilitation technician who speaks fluent Spanish. The employees will assist MDVR with I & E diversity initiatives and participate in an ad hoc diversity team which has been appointed to improve services to persons from diverse cultures.

**Funding Utilized for State Rehabilitation and Independent Living Council
Activities**

MDVR utilized Part B, Title I funds for SRC and Part B, Title VII funds for State Independent Living Council quarterly meetings. These funds are primarily used to pay for council members travel, meeting expenses, and supplies.

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

{Attachment 6.3}

Supported Employment (SE) services may be available for individuals with the most significant disabilities requiring special on-the-job supervision. The Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (MDVR) maintains cooperative, written agreements with nonprofit, private Supported Employment Service Providers (SESPs) to provide services on a fee-for-service basis.

Title VI, Part B funds are used to secure SESP services for consumers. Some of the services may include:

- functional assessments,
- surveying businesses and assurance of potential community-based assessment and work sites suited to the needs of the consumers,
- analysis of all relevant job-related variables, (i.e., transportation, job restructuring, tax credit for employers, etc.),
- provision of direct training at employment sites until employment standards have been achieved,
- development of an internal advocacy system, and/or
- providing long-term, extended services support with the consumer or employer; a minimum of twice per month.

MDVR is committed to providing greater access to SE services. The scope of SE services reaches throughout the state. As of 2003, all counties in Missouri are being served by SESP's creating more choice for consumers. The total number of SE clients grew from 675 to 1,040. Currently, there are 82 statewide SESP's.

During FY06, 3,346 MDVR consumers, with the most significant disabilities, received SE services. Seventy-three percent of the SE consumers who left the program were successfully employed in competitive jobs. SE consumers worked an average of 24 hours per week and earned an average of \$6.84 an hour. Most consumers had disabilities that were developmental or cognitive in nature.

MDVR's focus on quality SE services can be found in the division's goals and priorities. Several strategic objectives center on strengthening the relationship between MDVR and service providers. MDVR partners with local SESP's to maximize benefits for their mutual consumers. Each Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) district office has developed a "partnering plan" with area SESP's that outlines joint activities that will lead to successful employment outcomes for consumers. Each year, MDVR combines Quality Assessment Reviews and partner reviews to encourage communication and enhance relationships.

One of the methods that MDVR employs to continuously improve SE services and the service delivery process is through the use of a strategic team. The VR/CRP team (comprised of management and staff from MDVR and CRPs) meets four to six times a year to assess the needs of CRP/SESP programs and SE consumers. The team works on increasing services, reviewing feedback, and monitoring progress of process improvements.

To assist in determining the quality and effectiveness of SE services, MDVR asks its consumers. The FY06 Customer Satisfaction Survey results indicated that 92 percent of SE clients, who left services both successfully and unsuccessfully, felt their experience with VR was good, and 91 percent felt VR services improved their quality of life.

In an effort to improve SE services, MDVR is reviewing the Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) of Supported Employment (SE) for persons with serious mental illness. As part of its evaluation, MDVR, the Missouri Department of Mental Health's Division of Comprehensive Psychiatric Services, and the Institute for Community Inclusion from the University of Massachusetts-Boston applied for and were awarded an assessment and planning grant through the National Institute of Mental Health during FY06. The grant will be used to assess capacity across systems and implications for developing high fidelity supported employment.

MDVR can provide up to 18 months of community-based job training. The need for services is reviewed in three-month increments by the VR counselor, the SESP, and the SE consumer. Transitioning from supported employment to extended services occurs when the consumer requires job coaching services for 25 percent of the work time or less. In cases where consumers have serious and persistent mental illness, the 25 percent level does not apply; instead, the benchmark is the successful achievement of goals and objectives as outlined in monthly progress reports.